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# future. Our hunters as ever, this m

# WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



ince becoming editor, I've taken Air Gunner in a slightly different direction from my predecessor and most of the comments have been positive, but a few people have noticed that we were having fewer kit review articles, so this month
I've corrected that. I'm reviewing
an ideal pair of airgun hunting multi-tool that's stolen a march on the other manufacturers in terms of cutting ability. I also have some interesting lubrication products that you can win free of charge if you complete my questionnaire on page 78. Five of you will get Ballistol goody bags containing the 'miracle oil' as described on page 56.

The last survey we ran gave us a great response and loads of useful information, so I hope that this one will do the same. It will cost you no more than an envelope and a stamp and you could win a great prize, so please complete it and help to steer Air Gunner to a better future.

Our hunters have been as busy as ever, this month proving the

value a well-aimed airgun pellet has to the rural community, and to ourselves. Charlie Portlock has learned to barter his extra rabbits in exchange for the produce he needs, and Jamie has taken on a huge challenge, to put those noisy shotgun boys in their place. I don't suggest that we'll ever compete with the top guys who shoot two or three hundred birds in a day, but we can still provide a valuable service to our hosts.

Perhaps my favourite article this month sees Eddie Jones taking his son hunting for the very first time. Ever the responsible father and ethical hunter, Eddie tests Owen's skills to the limit before even letting him near a living creature. Turn to page 27 to see if the young man succeeded in his quest to become a real hunter, like his dad. Seeing an experienced man like Eddie bringing the next generation into the sport in the right way is heart warming. It's also proof that despite all the technological toys on offer to kids today, actual reality outclasses virtual reality every time.



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NEWSAGENT - Air Gunner is on sale on the first Wednesday of the month and is distributed by Seymour

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The editor unveils a selection of exciting features for our November edition





# IN THE NEWS

For the very latest news visit us at www.airgunshooting.co.uk

# Roger Retires

Webley & Scott Limited announce that Roger P. Williams retired from the board of directors, effective 5th August 2015, following the sale of his minority interest. Roger has been actively involved in the development of Webley & Scott Limited since August 2010, and the board

would like to thank him for his dedication and contribution to the company and wish him success in his other business interests. Webley & Scott Limited has been at the forefront of new product development, along with a focus on quality, consistency, and innovation, and currently has the brands of Webley & Scott, Webley and AGS within its portfolio.

# **Totally On Target**

Target Air is a growing company with an equally growing choice of targets to suit all tastes. They have everything from official NRSA 10-metre paper targets, to stacks of fun ones with photos of typical airgun quarry, zombie ones, and more besides. These can be held in their 3mm-thick, welded steel pellet catcher that will survive years of full-power hits. Away from paper, they have spinners of all shapes and sizes, some freestanding, with others that can be screwed into wood for versatility. We'll bring you a more in-depth review soon.

www.target-air.co.uk





# More Bullpups

With bullpups being all the rage these days, AC Guns has a brand new one, the Noblesse, which looks stunning. We've only seen photographs so far, but we've been promised one for review very soon. We were pleased to see a walnut stock option as well as a black synthetic, so that it will stand out in the crowd. The actions use a side lever to cycle a 10-shot rotary magazine and

this has an automatic system that prevents double-loading. We're told to expect 150 shots in .177, and 180 in .22, which is very impressive. Prices start from £799.

www.acguns.co.uk

# Daystate at the Lowther Game Fair

Every year, Daystate supports volunteers of the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group at the Lowther Game fair in Cumbria, headed by our own Jerry Moss. This year's show was, for once, bathed in fabulous sunshine and the group were able to demonstrate 10 Daystate rifles to hundreds of shooters, and at the same time gather much needed funds for this worthwhile charity. For more info on the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, log on to www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk. www.daystate.com





# IN THE NEWS

# Keep an Eye Out

Just as we were going to press, we received the dreadful news that the Leicester & District SR & PC shooting club has been

burgled. On Thursday the 6th of August the club's strong room was broken into through a strengthened outside wall, and a total of 18 rimfire rifles, 7 air pistols and 6 air rifles were stolen. The following Air Arms rifles

were taken; Alpha Pistol – 4471201205, S400 Superlite - 103505, S400 MPR -068420, EV2 - 47869 and finally a TX200 - 95631. If you should be offered any of these guns please inform the police.

# **Look North**

Here's a date for your diary if you live in the North. On Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th May 2016 at the Yorkshire Event Centre, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, there will be a brand new shooting show which promises 65,000 square feet of guns, scopes, clothing and everything else any airgunner might ever need. It is held indoors. so there will be no worries about bad weather or muddy ground and you will be able to browse at your leisure in complete comfort. You'll also find an airgun range for sporting rifles, and a pistol range, with expert instruction and competitions, together with an area reserved for manufacturers to let you 'try before you buy'.



# Rangemaster Kaiser **Pellets**

Airgun manufacturer, Daystate, has been quietly developing a new pellet in conjunction with the German pellet company H&N. H&N

produce some of the best pellets and have world championship match wins to their credit. The new pellet is based on the popular Field Target Trophy model, but has been specially selected to suit Daystate and Brocock Walther barrels. Branded under

the Rangemaster label, the new pellets are titled 'the Kaiser series' and come in screw-top tins of 500.

Prices are as follows: .177 £11.55, .20 £15.18, .22 £15.18

www.daystate.com

Davstate's latest pellet will soon be here

world's

# Midland Game Fair

It's just a few days until the annual airgun extravaganza of the Midland Game Fair, which is on the 19th and 20th of September. It's one of the most important airgun events of the year, with all the important manufacturers and importers in attendance to show their wares. There's always a real buzz at this show,

aided by the European Field Target Championships being held just up the hill from the main Airgun Expo. Competitors come from all across Europe to compete, bringing some airgun exotica that you won't see anywhere else. It's a proper family day out with something for everybody, so we hope to see you there.

www.midlandgamefair.co.uk





# Camo It is Back!

Camo It, the manufacturers of camouflage kits for your guns, is back in business after a short break. They offer two unique patterns of their own, plus three from Jack Pyke; English Woodland, Wildlands and English Oak. You can buy their kits through eBay for £49.99, and each one has enough material to cover a rifle, scope and silencer. Having used their products, we can tell you that they work and are durable, to boot.

www.camoit.co.uk

# **WINNER!**

The winner of our August Yukon Photon XT is <mark>Simon</mark> Mantell from East Sussex He's a super-keen rabbit shot, so he'll test his new night vison to its limits

See our latest competition on page 48.

**Smashing New Targets** 

Chalk targets are available once again from your local retailer. The Bisley Shoot-N-Smash targets measure 42mm in diameter and are sold in retail boxes of 50

targets, which are securely packaged to help to avoid breakage. When shot, the chalk targets smash with a puff

of powdered chalk, indicating a direct hit. They're great fun for back garden plinking, or shooting at the range. RRP £4.99 per box of 50 targets

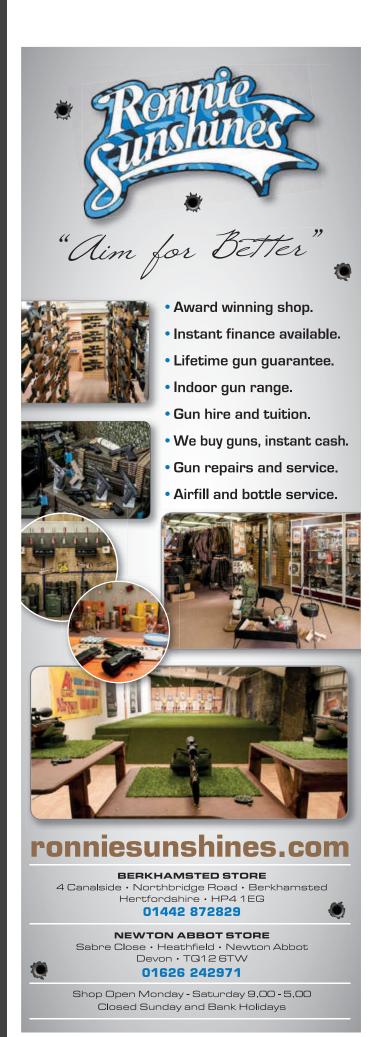
Reactive targets are always great fun



# **SMK Shooting Guide**

SMK has a brand-new catalogue out, listing their vast selection of guns, scopes and shooting accessories. It also contains an airgun-shooting guide packed with reviews and tests of their products, by top experts from leading publications. There are lots of ways to get your free copy. You can visit SMK's website, their Facebook page, call them on 01206 795333 or email website@sportsmk.co.uk





# YOUR LETTERS



# Please don't worry

I have been an avid fan of the mag for over 15 years and this is my first letter, so please be kind! I have moved from a .22 Air Arms S410 to a .177 S410 after recently getting into HFT, as well as keeping up hunting, and discovering the more forgiving trajectory benefits of .177 on my score card. Whilst my HFT scores have gone up and the .177 is every bit as effective at dropping quarry with a head shot, I have noticed that although cleanly dispatched, a rabbit may still 'twitch' for

some time after, something that I didn't see with .22. I have no doubt that they're expired, and cleanly with no suffering, but there is still some nerve movement occasionally, that made me double-check when I first saw it. Do you know why this happens? Would a heavier pellet, such as an AA Field, or Bisley Magnum, reduce this over my current choice of H&N FTTs or Accupells.

Thanks for any advice.

Chris

From Exeter

Hello Chris benefits if .177 for hunting, but for me that was over 25 years ago. Any animal being brain-shot will often twitch for some time

after death, as you rightly say. I've shot rabbits with everything from a modestly powered .177 to a 250 ft.lbs. .17HMR, which removes the whole brain, and I can tell you, twitching is the norm. Ed.





# **British wildlife**

I am relatively new to airgun shooting/hunting, and I would just like to share my most recent and fruitful session. I decided to set up a static hide with my shooting buddy, and wait for the rabbits that we had been seeing plenty of, but we'd had no results so far. During the set up, we were lucky enough to see up close a young buzzard and parent in full flight, easily recognisable from their cries above us. Then, when we had set up the hide, a large male roe deer appeared from the wheat fields and headed our way. We saw him a further two times, as well as a lone muntiac deer.

a red (green? Ed) woodpecker, a dozen rabbits, and plenty of pigeons and crows, to boot. What completed our evening was a pair of decent sized rabbits, both head-shot from 30 yards. It's not always what we shoot when we are out, it's also the chance to see various wildlife up close, and being able to watch them from the comfort of a hide. This has increased our interest and we will be certain to set the hide up again for more of the same! Regards, and keep up the great mag!

#### Nick Keenan

# lp me, please!

I have recently inherited a very old Diana 'Original' Foreign MOD 50E in .22. I would like to restore the gun to its original condition because it came to

me without the rear sight. I have tried airgunning forums, and even wrote to Diana in Germany trying to source the

told that other manufacturers may have something that will fit, but I would like to make the gun as original as possible. I have no intention of ever parting with it because

and I want to be able to pass it to my sons when the time shoot it. The gun is pre-1964 and I have included some pictures to show exactly the Mark Millward

481 006, Mark. They carry an amazing range of spares for hundreds of rifles and pistols.

Good luck. Ed.



# Just the right tool

I recently bought a new rifle, and when removing the action from the stock to apply oil to the underside of the action, I found that there was a run of varnish that made it a bit tight to remove and refit smoothly. I made a couple of 'files' to sand down the run and some other bits of rough wood; one from an old paper scraper, and the other from a six-inch

length of steel ruler. Emery and glass paper of different grades were stuck on with double-sided sticky tape, and these made rigid tools that ensured a nice flat surface to keep the jobs as square as possible. Some DIY readers might like to make these for themselves.

Mick Ward



# **Valuations**

I have just obtained a Mark II Webley Junior Air Pistol .177. It is still in its original box with 'Instructions, for use and maintenance', also a round, plastic container full of 'jacketed pellets' the type of which I've never heard. They are pointed and on the box it says, 'Sussed Armoury, Hailsham, England - .177 cal 4.5mm Nominal 750'. The gun is in top condition. Please can you tell me the cost of the gun new and what it's worth today? I'd also like to know its age if possible. It is black and still in good working order. On the front of the box is a young lad with gun in hand.

# Mr F M Saddington

The Webley 'Mark II Junior' air pistol was made from 1973 and

the cost when new was £14.50. Manufacture ended in late 1976, and it was later replaced by the 'Typhoon' model pistol in 1977. These later juvenile, alloy-frame models are not as desirable to collectors as the earlier steel-bodied 'Junior' air pistols made from 1929. Although an excellent air pistol, the value of the Mark II is still fairly low, but the corrugated card box with carrying handle and photograph of a boy with a 'Beatle' hairstyle adds to the collector interest. It has, however, appreciated considerably in value since it was new. It's not possible to know the value of any gun without seeing it and being able to test it properly. We receive many requests like this and are sorry to disappoint, but offering a value from a guess would be no help to anybody. Ed.



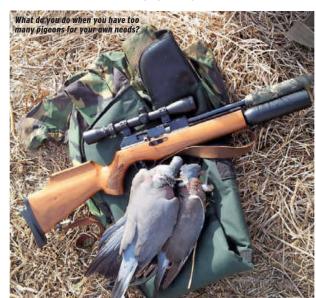
# Get in touch...

Post your letters to: Letters, Air Gunner, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EG

phill.price@archant.co.uk

# **Summer Surplus**

Whilst my permission isn't the biggest at about 25 acres, I am managing to bag a



reasonable number of pigeons from a barn roof, and rabbits from a warren, and more now with the

summer here. At the moment, there is no more room in my freezer, but the owner wants me up there twice a week to control pests. I read about others taking their excess meat to a game dealer but can't find one near me and I'm not sure if they would take the four rabbits and couple of pigeons that I shoot a week. Any advice?

Thanks Tom

Hello Tom It's funny that you should mention this just now. Like you, many of us have a 'summer surplus' and I've always enjoyed sharing any game meat that I can't use with my friends, neighbours and family. However, if you read Charlie Portlock's article If you have a top tip, something you'd like to get off your chest, or an interesting anecdote, then why not shoot us a line? We print the best letters and emails each month and one will be awarded a top prize. It's over £60 and you could win it simply by getting in touch and sharing your views

**ESSENCIAL** 

on page 41, you'll see he's found an even better use, by trading with others for things he needs. It seems like the perfect country solution to me. Ed.

# **Top Service**

I was totally blown away with the look and spec of the Ronnie Sunshines' Platinum, limited edition, BSA Scorpion, which adorned the cover of the August issue. I re-read the article several times and just knew that this would be my ultimate rifle, but reality soon kicked in and I just had to accept that it was beyond my reach, financially. The state pension

and a rapidly diminishing, small 'pot' of savings don't allow for such flights of fancy, no matter how attractive! I'd just about reconciled myself to that fact, when I received an unexpected 'phone call. I'd forgotten about a guitar that I'd advertised for sale some months back, and here was someone on the line asking if it was still available. The upshot was, later that day the person turned up on my doorstep and bought the guitar, so I now had the means of

buying the rifle without strain on my limited resources, or the associated guilt-trip that would have accompanied it and probably tainted the purchase. My existing rifle is a BSA and I've absolutely nothing but praise for it - and the fantastic support available from those guys at Armoury Road, Chris Dunne in particular! So I had no qualms whatsoever about acquiring another of their products, especially after your review. Anyway, the next day I placed

my order with Ronnie Sunshines and chose number 003/150 in .177 calibre. Not surprisingly, number 007 had already gone. Wonder why? Delivery was scheduled on 10th August, but lo and behold, mine arrived at my local RFD on Friday 7th. Fantastic! Needless to say, I'm really pleased with both the gun and the service I received from the Sunshines' team. I just have to do it justice now!

**Stephen Davies** 







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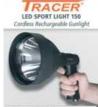






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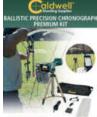
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# ROUND 4 OF THE STATE OF THE STA

# Gary Chillingworth has all the HFT news

s we approached the halfway point of the UKAHFT national series, it was time to travel to the home of the mighty Rivington Riflemen. Located just outside of Bolton, in Lancashire, Rivington is a formidable and testing place to shoot. Nestled on the side of mountain, and surrounded by hordes of mutant sheep, this venue is not for the fainthearted; the wind is so strong, it has been known for young girls to be picked up and deposited many miles away with just a scarecrow and talking lion for company - the tin man was in for a service. So, with this very bad analogy in mind, you can imagine what it is like to shoot an 8.44 grain pellet at a 25mm target at 40 yards. Rivi' has always been a challenge, and for 2015 this was still the case. The course this year had been set by a new team, and the likes of Dave Benyon and his mighty minion, Dave Ramshead, had gone all out to set a course that would be a beast. What they came up with was a good, old-fashioned HFT course with tough targets that you had to be brave and skilful to shoot. For instance, peg no1 was a bird in a tree. It was a 25mm at 40 yards and

Above: Jess Ellis and her S200 showed the grown-ups how to shoot

Right: Jennie Stone and Sandra Amey from AFFC

Below: The raffle winners look rightly there was a strong right-to-left wind that was cycling up and down. At its peak, it was probably 15mph, dropping down to about 5mph.

The issue was clearance. When you looked at the target, there was wood on both sides, and if you wanted to shoot the target at the height of the wind, you would have to aim at wood and hope that the wind caught the pellet and blew it into the kill. If, however, you mistimed your shot and pulled the trigger as the wind dropped, the pellet would fly straight and all you would get were splinters. You could, of course, aim for the body of the plate and guarantee a hit and 1 point, but if you wanted the 2, you had to go big or go home. Luckily for me, I went big and managed to kill the target. I then managed to miss the next two easier targets, but that is the world of HFT at its most annoying.

When the shooters came off of the course, there was a mixture of people;

some who were elated at staying in the 50s and others who looked broken and defeated. Personally, I was very happy with my 54, although two very simple misses had cost me a possible 3rd place, but that's shooting.

Pete Dutton was the winner of



"some were elated at staying in the 50s and others who looked broken and defeated"



# "All in all, we raised just under £1300 and my faith in human nature was restored"

the Open with a 57; Theressa Reed was top lady with a 52; Perry Broad was the best boinger with a 47. Tom Willingham won the 14-16 class with a 46, and Mitchel Birch was Top Junior in the 9-13. The manufacturer's team trophy was won by BSA, and Maldon was top team.

This was by far the best Rivi' shoot in years and a huge amount of credit goes to the hard-working team at this great and friendly club.

Sponsored by BSA (Photos by Tom Willingham)

#### **Maldon Charity Shoot**

The people who shoot HFT, FT, and many other types of shooting are good people. You will not find a more generous and friendly bunch of misfits anywhere in the country and you can quote me on that. Like any group, however, every now and then one of us needs a bit of help. Whether this is due to a loss in the family, or people who are sick, life can often overtake us and before we know it, we need some support. This is where charities like 'Action for Family Carers' come in. This organisation helps people who have lost a loved one, or who are struggling to cope with a relative who is nearing their end. They help kids with terminally ill parents, and parents with sick children; they can help with respite care and support, whether it is on the phone or through a group;

basically, they are the people who are there when we need it.

Maldon's very own Jennie Stone needed the help of these wonderful people when she lost her parents at the end of last year, so with this in mind, she came up with the idea of raising a bit of money for this wonderful charity. Now, as Jennie owns a gun club, and she also knows a bunch of reprobates who will do anything on a Saturday to avoid mowing the lawn, it was decided to hold an open shoot with all the proceeds going to Action for Family Carers.

This is where I would usually talk about the shoot, but essentially, we turned up, shot 30 tin chickens and had a good time. What I really want to talk about is the generosity of the shooting world. Jennie called Peter Zammit, of the Airgun Centre in Rayleigh, explained what we were doing, and without hesitation, he donated £600 of vouchers for a first prize; Greg Hensman donated an HFT starter kit; our local pub, the Hurdlemakers Arms, donated vouchers for free meals; the UKAHFT threw in an entry to the Worlds; JP Woodlifetrails donated a friction fire lighting course, and members of the club raided their gun bags and cabinets and supplied scopes, torches and a host of other bits and bobs to be auctioned off.

All in all, we raised just under £1300, and my faith in human nature



Above: Jess Hesson travelled all the way from the charity shoot

Bottom left: The Panther is always an impressive sight

Bottom right: Helen Kelly, winner of the BSA Scorpion was restored. This can be a horrible old world at times; it can be unfair and cruel, but every now and then a group of people dressed in camo and rolling around in the mud with guns, can make the world that we live in a little bit better.

If you feel that you would like to donate to this wonderful group, then their website is www.affc.org.uk and if you want to buy a new gun or scope, then please visit the Airgun Centre in Rayleigh; they are wonderful people and generous to a fault. Their website is www.theairguncentre.com.





# SILENCER SECRETS

# The editor looks at Webley's oversleeve technology

Tebley is very strong in the affordable, spring-piston rifle world. They have a range of price points to cover everybody's pocket, including the VMX, Spector and Stingray models. Some have been offered with silencers in the past, but now all are offered with what Webley describes as an 'oversleeve' named Quantum. Other brands have called this a barrel shroud, or perhaps a silencer, but Webley likes to differentiate theirs because it contains some unique features.

At the muzzle, the first chamber 'back reflexes' the high-pressure air from behind the pellet into the cavity between the barrel and the sleeve. This slows down the air, reducing the sound. In this section, there's a bleed hole that eliminates any over-pressure. The following chambers incorporate baffles and two acoustic felt cages, to absorb any remaining pressurised air as the pellet passes through. This staged pressure absorption technique is common in firearm moderators where the volume and temperature of the propellant gas is far greater, and now it's showing its worth on the airgun scene. Webley has huge experience with firearms and this is just one example of how technology is shared.

#### Slow down

This system effectively captures and decelerates the high-pressure air that follows the pellet from the muzzle. It's this that makes the sharp 'crack' that can disturb our quarry, and for that matter, our neighbours. Once the energy in the air has been absorbed inside the oversleeve, the noise has been deadened and so as the air exits the end of the silencer, it makes little in any sound.

The oversleeve has other advantages. It's made from hard, anodised aluminium, which won't corrode from the sweat on our hands. The salts from our skin easily corrode blued steel, and you so often see old break-barrel rifles with no bluing left at the muzzle, where they've been gripped thousands of times. The oversleeve protects the Webley barrels from that fate. Also, being thicker than a bare barrel, it acts as an aid, apparently reducing the perceived cocking effort needed.

Quite a few readers have told me that they like the look of a sleeved barrel. They feel that the bull-barrel look gives the rifle a more substantial appeal, and we all like a good-looking gun, don't we? The assembly is strippable, and I'm told that no maintenance is needed in normal use, but it could be dismantled if, for example, you got dirt inside from catching the muzzle on the ground.

For full details and where to locate your nearest dealer visit www. highlandoutdoors.co.uk or call 0845 099 0252 ■



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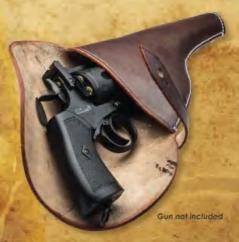


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# You and Air Arms a winning combination







appealing, yet so often I've compromised that preference to get the performance I need. There's something almost jewel-like about a neat, tidy, hunting gun that's a pleasure to carry for hours, but it has to deliver top-class accuracy and consistent power as well. In my intentionally modest collection of rifles, I have a BSA R10 MKII, the manufacturer's current hunting flagship, which is a terrific gun, yet I'm always drawn to the neat little Ultra SE whenever I see one. The slim

Above: The weight and balance suited me perfectly fore end is possible because the air reservoir is a slender tube, rather than the R10's chubby buddy bottle. Of course, the latter can deliver a massively larger number of shots per The Ultra has been around for quite a while so is well developed and proven, and now comes in an impressive choice of stocks from beech and multi-cam camouflage, to lurid pink

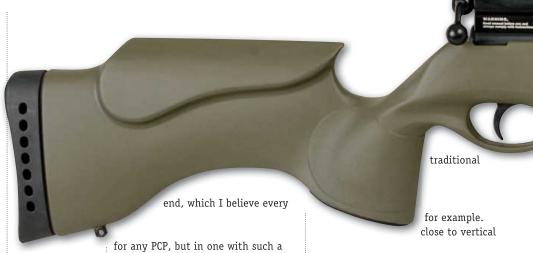
# "Out in the real world, that amounts to 1/5" difference in trajectory at 35 yards"

fill, but when I'm hunting I'll rarely shoot more than 20 shots, so that's not such a big deal for me.

Been around a bit

- if that's your thing. Despite being their least expensive pre-charged rifle, I was happy to see that it benefits from BSA's extraordinary cold-hammer forged barrel, which is respected around the world as one of the best you can buy. As standard, it comes screw-cut 1/2" UNF and is fitted with a pepper-pot-style muzzle brake. I've never understood what this was for because everybody fits a silencer as the very first thing they do. I did just that by fitting one of BSA's VC (variable choke) models which elimates the nasty PCP bark and replaces it with a muted cough. Perfect. Because the rifle is so short, fitting a much-needed moderator still leaves us with a handy gun.

The action contains BSA's Fast-Strike hammer system that reduces action-time, meaning that your shots leave the muzzle quicker, so you have less time to wander off aim after



# "It's an intelligent blend of what's good about target stocks and the versatility of a traditional sporter"

the trigger breaks, and it's fed by a 10-shot rotary magazine that has recently been updated. The chambers are now made from a self-lubricating synthetic material and having used these in my own and other test guns, I know they work flawlessly. Another improvement is a little window in the part of the mag' that faces you, which shows a bright dot when it reaches the last shot. There's also a pressure gauge hidden in the belly of the fore

Below right: Because the mag' sits low in the action a one-piece scope mount can be

Below: I'll have my usual moan about the safety being on the wrong side

Bottom: A screw-on metal cap keeps the filling port clean

#### Free camo

The stock I chose was the matte green synthetic model. I first saw this used when BSA was pursuing a big contract to supply the cadets, and I liked it immediately. The green is free camouflage in my eyes and being synthetic, it will shrug off mud, water and blood with no effort at all. I also really like the shape. It's an intelligent blend of what's good about target stocks and the versatility of a

small reservoir it becomes critical to

the trigger blade and has a full palm swell, despite being ambidextrous. There's also a nice wide shelf to support a thumb-up grip, which is what I always use. This is true progress in making sporting rifles better, by learning from what the competition guys use.

There are small details that add to the pleasure of this stock for me. Firstly, it has a slightly textured finish that offers grip in poor weather and eliminates reflections. Next, it has sling swivel studs fitted as standard. Can anybody tell me why all the other manufacturers don't follow BSA's lead? Hunting guns need slings. End of story! You don't want to carry a rifle in your hands for hours, because the fatigue will









rifle down, perhaps rested against a tree, but what about when there are no trees? Lay it in the wet grass? I don't think so! Sling swivel studs on every hunting gun from tomorrow please. Thank you.

## Compromised?

A small air reservoir will always be a compromise, so I fired up my trusted Skan chronograph, topped up the reservoir to 232bar and got bored silly firing shot after shot through a small black box, but hey, we all have to suffer for our art, don't we? I reached for my standard test pellet,

being said, after 40 shots velocity did drop off rapidly, getting down to 700 mag for rats and ferals around the yard; high mag for long-range rabbits

# "fitting one of BSA's VC (variable choke) models which eliminates the nasty PCP bark and replaces it with a muted cough"

Below right: The new magazine worked flawlessly

Below: In the field the handling was spot-on

fps in the next 10 shots, so be aware.

To allow a rifle of this quality to be sold at this price BSA chose not to fit a regulator. Regs' are complicated and delicate animals that can only be manufactured to the very highest specifications, or they're junk. They also have a questionable reputation as and fun target-shooting sessions.

Parallax adjustment is essential
(Essencial? Ed.) in my book, and the scope on test ticked all the boxes for me. The Scope Master mount set it low to the barrel, optimising trajectory and



also keeping good contact between my face and the cheek piece. The scope's modest weight had no negative effect on the excellent handling, so I was wall placed with the combination

That's light enough to carry for four

stunningly accurate guns. The pressure "I feel this gorgeous little rifle is just was on. Just for once in my life as a gun tester, I was greeted by a calm what most airgun hunters need" day, so I knew the results would be down to me and the kit and not





Manufacturer BSA Guns Model Ultra SE Type Pre-charged pneumatic Action Magazine-fed, bolt-action Length 94 cm (36¾") Weight 2.6kg (5.7lbs) Fill pressure 232bar Shots per fill 40 in .177, 50 in .22 Trigger Two-stage adjustable Ultra SE £519.00 (synthetic stock) Spare mag £46.20

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VC silencer £46.20 4-12 x 44 AO £92.30

Left: I love compact guns in the field

has been designed and engineered to please and satisfy the discerning and educated motorist. Well, this is a shooter's rifle. It responds to your wishes, and as long as you're up to the job, the Ultra SE will deliver your message.

a warm, yet

day, the sight picture was sharp

I feel this gorgeous little rifle is just what most airgun hunters need. Please note: I didn't say 'want'. It might not be the latest whizz-bang thing. It might not offer all the bells and whistles and perhaps it might not be the coolest kid on the block, but it will place your pellet where you want it, and that's what airgun hunting is all about. Precision shot placement is the foundation of all airgun shooting and I hit what I aimed at every time I did my bit, and you can't ask for more than that. I hope BSA's lovely PR team aren't paying too much attention to my scribblings, because this one won't be going home until they make me send it back, and even then I might forget that they called ... Sorry.

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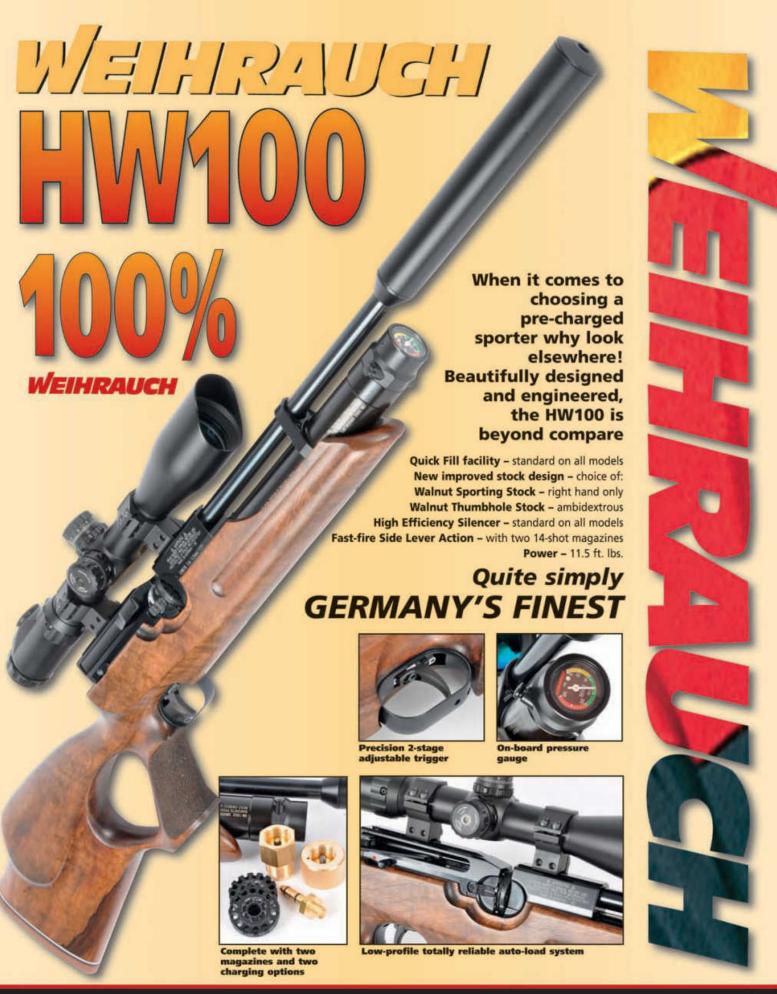


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HW100S QF	.177 / .22	410mm	3.8kg

# Eddie Jones is the proudest dad as his son takes his first rabbit

his month is a bit different from my usual hunts. I have been getting my son, Owen, out a bit more lately. His Xbox has been number one, and unfortunately, will be for the foreseeable future, but the lure of the rifle has tempted him more of late. When I first started him shooting a rifle, I didn't want him to find it too easy. I wanted him to feel what recoil was, the smell of the warm grease after a shot. I even made sure there was no scope fitted, like it was in the good old days. I think kids have it way too easy these days, and take for granted how easy it is to shoot a PCP; they need to go through all the emotions as we did back in the day.

Having made him suffer for a good few sessions with the old BSA and Diana, it was time to let him shoot my Impact PCP. We had been up to the field on a local permission a good few times and he took to it like a pro. No matter how hard the target, he always seemed to hit it. Granted, it was off a bi-pod and it was with a PCP that is as accurate as you can get, but he still had to get the breathing right and hold it the same every shot. With the Impact, he had to hold it slightly off his shoulder and set the scope up to his style, but he still hit the target

most times.

#### Three generations

This last session we had was not planned, and not with the trusty Impact. My dad had mentioned going out, and Owen had heard about our planned rabbit hunt. He asked to come out with us and watch us shoot, and seeing him so keen it was a no-brainer.

Below: That's my boy!

Bottom: I coached him every step of the way

The day arrived and I had given my dad a call to confirm it was still on, and he had started the sob story that he had a bad cold and wasn't going, but I wanted to take Owen out shooting so I asked him if he still wanted to go. He was still keen, but he wanted to shoot Granddad's gun. Now, carrying two guns was not going to happen, so I decided to take him shooting targets because he hadn't shot my dad's Theoben MFR before. Well, we got to my dad's and stole all the gear I needed, then hopped over his back fence and we were on our ground. We decided to go to the usual spot that we always use, which is an area where you can get out of any wind, and it makes it easier for Owen.

On our way to the field, we had noticed a couple of rabbits sitting in front of a mound of earth that they have dug in to make their home. Owen's eyes lit up and he asked if we could still shoot a rabbit after we'd had our play on the targets. How could I refuse? I get to see him shoot, and then I can have a play later; a win, win for me. Having set the targets up it was time to set the MFR to his shooting style. Luckily, my dad is halfblind so it was not far off to how we needed it set up. I had set up a 25mm lollipop target and a small resettable pigeon. I could let him shoot these



# A GHP OFF THE OUD BLOCK



for a while and then move to paper targets when he was getting confident with the rifle. He had been shooting steadily for a couple of hours on the targets when I thought it was time to put the paper ones up. I had told him that if he was shooting as consistently on paper as he was on the steel, I would let him have his first shot at a **Nerves** I knew that every nerve in his body was buzzing with excitement at the prospect of shooting a rabbit. If he could keep it together shooting this target, I was confident he would not get too excited and miss or injure the animal. His first shot was not far off the middle, and I could excuse that,

him being excited, and he was told

to go through all that I had shown him regarding breathing and how to squeeze the trigger through its stages. The next shot was closer; giving as much encouragement as I could, I watched the next shot hit the same hole as the last. I knew that the way he was hitting would be a kill every time if he was aiming for the back of

the eye of a rabbit, but I wanted him to get closer to the bull, so I upped the pressure. I told him if he couldn't hit the bull in the next five shots

way I was going to let him shoot at live quarry. Pressure on, I told him just to

take five shots,

then there was no

Below left: Only when I was sure Owen's accuracy was spot on did i let him try for a

no looking at where he had hit, just take the shots and then we would see how he got on after that. I had also put the target 30 yards away so he was having no special treatment. After what seemed hours, he finally took his last shot. As you can see, he definitely hit the bull and after all his hard work there was no way I could refuse him his shot at a rabbit.

## Just wait

We picked a spot to sit and wait for his rabbit to come out and give him his chance. I had given him what gear I could, so he would be well hidden behind some ferns and hoped that the rabbit wouldn't see him. I was well behind him, out of sight, but close enough that I could still coach him

"I knew that every nerve in his body was buzzing with excitement at the prospect of shooting a rabbit"

when the time arrived. After about 45 minutes, I saw a rabbit coming through the thistles on the bank. Owen had also noticed it and slowly turned to me with a big smile on his face. Trying to calm him down, I suggested that he wait until the rabbit was in the open and feeding confidently. It must have been the longest five minutes of his life. Finally, I let him line up on the rabbit. It was slightly closer than the targets, so I knew he should have no problem hitting it. I wanted to be right beside him, watching his body shake with excitement, but I held back and let him do what I had told him over and over, so many times.

I finally heard the pellet leave the MFR, and I was looking at the rabbit as he fired; it was all over in a split

pellet hit its head, a second later it was stretched out kicking the last moments of life from its body, and

Below: Owen collected his rabbit with total pride

# "Owen looked at me with the most

Owen looked at me with the most amazing smile I have ever seen. Trying to be the professional, I sent him over to retrieve his prize whilst I smiled to myself. We checked the rabbit and he had hit it spot-on, just under its ear for a clean kill. I am not sure who was the most excited, me or him, but what I did know was that feeling of shooting your first-ever live quarry, and it was a moment that we shared because we were together. I wanted Owen to shoot another, but I knew he was probably too excited to be steady. I made the

excuse that we needed to take pictures because I was going to use our day out for the magazine, so he was happy just to do that and go home. I am now sure the Xbox will be on the back seat if I ever ask him to come out again, because two days later, he still couldn't

amazing smile I had ever seen" Bottom: A proud dad and a happy son get the smile off his face! ■



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I'd done well – by my own standards – shooting the Air Arms HFT 500 at The World Hunter Field Target Championships. I now had a decision to make; should I try to persuade Air Arms to let me hold on to the rifle for an extended period, or should I try something different?

I decided that in all conscience, I couldn't buy another air rifle until I'd sold at least one. Like many Air Gunner readers, I hadn't started out with any thought of amassing a collection, but





it seems to have somehow grown of its own volition. Each of my rifles was purchased for a reason, and those reasons still hold good, and they all have their own merit, which means getting rid of even one of them would be a very painful decision. I'm sure this dilemma is not unfamiliar to many shooters. Besides which, if I replace a rifle, it has to be with something notably better. Was the HFT 500 notably better than any of my other rifles? How much of my recent improvement was down to improvements in my skill as a shooter and how much was down to the rifle? From recent conversations with readers, they'd like to know the answer to that almost as much as I do.

My decision, therefore, was to return to my first love and see how things turned out – a trial reconciliation, if you like. When I laid hands on the Daystate Mk3 for the first time, I was well and truly smitten. Regular readers will know that some time ago I wrote about trying to make this my 'one gun', suitable both for hunting as well as for competing in HFT events.

# Still heavy

Even though I'd lightened it guite a

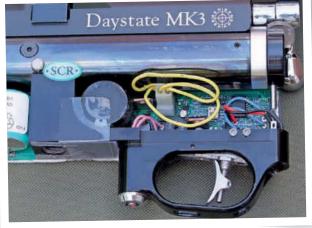
# "My score of 52 was 91.23% of Charles Peal's fantastic winning score of 57"

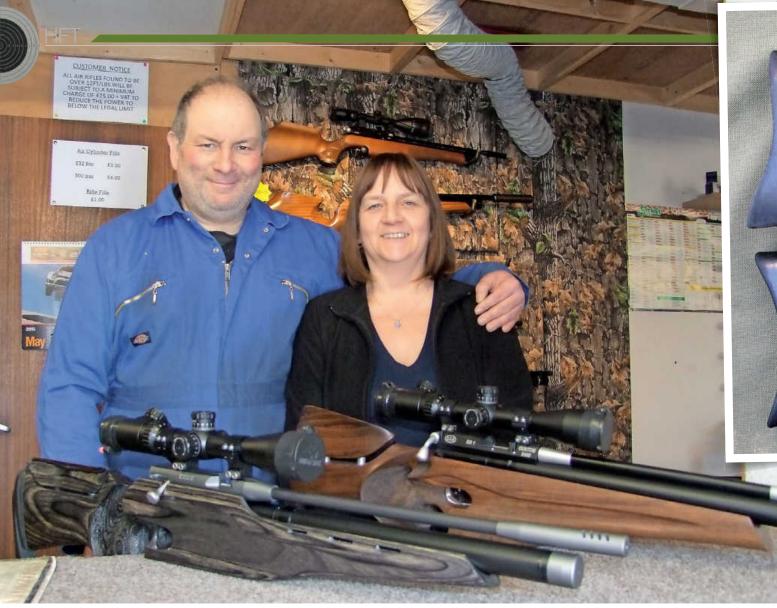
Main: To get a perfectly tailored fit, Neil Wakelin uses an alternative cheek piece on his HFT 500

Left: Does the button trigger make a key difference? Keith uses the flat side

The trigger button can be used either way round

Below: The Mk3's electronic trigger has always been a favourite of Keith's lot, the Mk3 was still a bit of a lump to carry around for several hours; there are other rifles I can use effectively in the field, so I'm giving up, temporarily at least, the idea of the one gun, but if I am going to give the Mk3 a serious try at HFT, I'd better revert to the adjustable 'FT' stock. One of the conclusions I'd come to with the HFT 500 is that the adjustable stock really comes into its own on shots when





parallax issues might come into play. I'll be telling you about my attempts to understand parallax properly in a future article, but before that, I really needed to get to grips with the consistency issue. The Mk3 was peppering pellets over an inch spread at 30 yards, with some flyers going even wider, and whether or not the two things were associated, the rifle was unable to deliver more than about 10.5 ft.lbs. of energy. It was time for a proper service.

Stafford Custom Rifles (SCR) is probably the premier name in airgun servicing and repair. Run by husband and wife team, Dave and Shirley Brayford, the business was set up in 2002, when Dave left his job as a technician at Daystate, where he'd been responsible for the development of the Harrier X, among others. Today, SCR is an authorised dealer for a wide range of rifles (see www.scrairguns.co.uk for a full list), and are authorised repair agents for Daystate, Logun and Crosman, and they can turn their hands to just about anything. Dave will even build you your own

bespoke rifle, but his waiting list is very, very long.

#### Spares

Turnaround time for the Mk3 was about a week, and the rifle came back complete with a bag containing all the parts Dave had replaced - about 10 '0' rings and washers - as well as a printout from his power tests. These showed that the service, including the regulator, had brought the power back up to an average of 11.55 ft. lbs. That's more like it!

I lost no time in mounting the action in the stock and fitting a scope, and then it was out to the garden to see how it performed. As expected, the first few shots were all over the place, but soon started to tighten up. It was a gusty day, which probably accounted for a degree of lateral drift as I got past the 50-shot mark, but I still wasn't comfortable with the vertical spread, so I got out one of my other guns and tested it ... a lot better! Maybe the service hadn't improved accuracy after all. My heart sank. I then decided to change pellets,

Above: Doing wonders for shooters. Dave and Shirley Brayford; his is the SCR Exile and hers is the SCR customised \$400

and I also took off the moderator and cleaned the barrel, bringing out a lot of deposit. That, I thought, would be the explanation, but when I shot it again, things had hardly improved. Could it be that I'd previously damaged the barrel crown, and the only way forward would be to replace it?

I zapped off an email to Shirley,

# "I hadn't been using lubed pellets in the Mk3 in my tests up to now"

explaining the situation, and she replied offering several points: Had I cleaned the barrel? Was the barrel band loose enough? - Dave had previously said that he'd had to slacken off the grub screws - and was the action loose enough in the stock? They say you should be able to slide a slip of paper underneath it for virtually the full length. Shirley also suggested that I use lubricated pellets, telling me that SCR recommends Lubro-Teknik over anything else.

I hadn't been using lubed pellets in



Left: Stock fit is critical. The Air Arms cheek piece tilts and pivots; the Daystate simply raises some zeroing at Quarry prior to competition is essential so you can get an idea of just how far the wind is going to take your pellets on this notoriously windy course. The only thing was, my first couple of shots didn't get anywhere near the zeroing targets – even the close ones! Was I going to have to get my standby rifle from the car? Then I had a minor brainwave; once I'd tightened up the moderator (idiot!) the pellets stopped clipping it as they exited the gun, and landed exactly where they should.

When shooting the HFT 500, I'd previously concluded that I could actually be quite a good shooter

# "Was the HFT 500 notably better than any of my other rifles?"



the Mk3 in my tests up to now, so I cleaned the barrel again and used the Air Arms ones I'd weighed and lubed a few weeks ago. That tip about 'floating' the action in the stock was something I'd learned a while ago, but in my haste to get going again with the rifle I'd forgotten about it.

#### Ready to go

Guess what? Grouping improved to



the extent that I revised a previous decision and decided to shoot the Mk3 in the upcoming first round of the UKAHFT national series at Quarry Hunters in Wales. This would be the big test of the rifle. The nationals run from April to October, with shooters travelling to venues far and

wide.
Doing

Above: There's no problem using a moderator on HFT rifles, just make sure it is properly tightened!

Left: The tiny grub screws in the Mk3 barrel band can have a big effect on accuracy in windless conditions, but I was useless in anything more than a light breeze. At Quarry, the wind ranged from moderate, to brisk and blustery, and in its usual manner caused a lot of strong men to despair, but surprise, surprise - not me! My score of 52 was 91.23% of Charles Peal's fantastic winning score of 57 - which Pete Dutton equalled - and I was 13th equal in a field of 134 shooters, including ladies. This was my 4th best percentage score in the previous five months, and only one point less on the day than the current world champion. Significantly, my score with my 10-year-old-plus Daystate Mk3 is up there with the scores I achieved with the HFT 500. Could it be that I'm actually improving as

a competitive shooter? Time will tell, but it looks set to be an interesting few months.





# **Tactical Range**

Available now at all good gun retailers.





# Jim Chapman explains how he takes those long shots

Then I submitted an article recounting one of my prairie dog hunts recently, our Mr Price followed up with some pointed questions about long-range shooting. Having followed the British shooting press for many years, I appreciate that the prevailing views on the long-range shots I was describing flew in the face of conventional wisdom. Phill asked me to explain to the British reader, the rationale behind long-range airgunning.

A good place to start, is defining what is meant by 'long-range' in an airgunning context. Growing up Main: Strong, stable shooting sticks are vital to success

Below: This shows clearly the trajectory and what I need to do hunting predators and big game, with firearms, I was accustomed to long-range shooting. A mule deer at 300 yards with my 30-06, or reaching out considerably further for a coyote, wasn't considered exceptionally long-range. For a standard calibre air rifle, however, I would suggest that the term long-range' is 75-120 yards.

The American experience with airguns evolved in isolation, and in

For a standard calibre air rifle, however I would suggest that the term 'longrange' is 75-120 yards" our early days there was not a widely shared view on what constituted an acceptable range for hunting. I have to admit that we pushed the limits as we sought to define reasonable shooting boundaries. Along the way, we found that with the guns and conditions available to us, we could extend the range in certain circumstances. There are a few fundamental differences between hunting in the States and the UK to consider before moving this discussion along; first and foremost would be the guns themselves.

#### No limits

In the US, we have no limitations on energy levels for airguns, and therefore started to modify guns, and/ or request higher energy levels from the manufacturers. I have a fairly large collection of standard calibre (.22, .30) rifles with the majority in the 40 - 120 fpe class. Many of the British writers, and these are gentlemen whose opinions I greatly respect, are standard bearers for the sub-12 fpe guns' capabilities, and for the quarry and hunting scenarios they encounter it is a reasonable position to take. Considering the legal restrictions that British shooters operate under, I would



probably do the same, but all things considered, I prefer a more powerful rifle so long as the accuracy is there.

Why stretch the distance with an airgun? For me, the answer is different depending on whether we are talking about target shooting, hunting, or pest control. In respect to target shooting, it is simply a matter of the challenge and testing what the gun, pellet, and the operator behind the trigger are capable of. When you're using a .30 calibre FX Boss to knock over a prairie dog-sized steel target consistently at 150 yards, it makes you feel that you have all the angles sorted out and are accomplishing some very good shooting.

#### Speaking for myself

The rationale for shooting longer range on live quarry is a different matter, though. I'm going to speak for myself in explaining why I sometimes opt for longer shots, because this is not my usual preference when airgun hunting. The reason I have moved from firearms to airguns, is the challenge. Not the challenge of testing the limits of the guns, but rather to test myself as a hunter in an attempt to close the distance with my quarry. I like the fact that airguns require me to hunt smarter, relying in fieldcraft to be successful, but there are also situations, depending on quarry and conditions, which limit one's ability to get in close. Moving inside of 100 yards

: Long-range the FX inator .25 and

Bottom: The FX Wildcat is quickly becoming a favourite on a prairie dog in the open grasslands takes some stalking skill and is often not possible. This is a species that needs to be controlled, and an airgun allows access to areas where, because of livestock or other safety issues, a firearm just wouldn't do.

I think it is fair to say that the energy level of the guns we shoot in the USA has a lot to do with our success at longer ranges. The higher velocity guns don't leave the pellets exposed to the effects of gravity and other variables for as long, so trajectory and windage are easier to account for. With respect to airgun calibres, some do better than others for long-range shooting. My observation is that the larger the calibre and heavier the pellet, the better the

long-range accuracy. These pellets retain energy more efficiently, and are less susceptible to light winds. In my experience, there is no place for the .177 in this application, they shed velocity too rapidly and can get blown about in even light breezes.

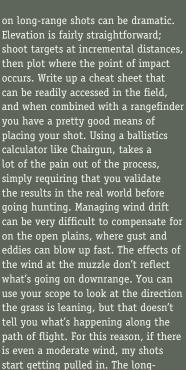
#### What works?

Attributes of a long-range platform, in my opinion, are; a heavier rifle that will settle solidly onto shooting sticks, with an adjustable cheek piece and butt pad. You want to make sure that the gun fits perfectly, allowing the marksman to lock into position, be it prone, sitting, or kneeling. Notice I don't say 'offhand, or standing', because I don't consider these appropriate for long-range shooting





# on long-range shots can be dramatic. Elevation is fairly straightforward; shoot targets at incremental distances, then plot where the point of impact



There are a few long-range shooting events I've competed in; the LASSO event in Texas with steel rams at 100-300 yards is shot with big bores, and Extreme Benchrest (EBR) in Arizona is shot with standard calibre guns at 75 yards, and demonstrates in a controlled way what these guns are capable of. I can honestly say that in four years of shooting the EBR, and that's hundreds of rounds in practice and competition - often in windy conditions - I have only sent a few pellets downrange that would not have resulted in a dead prairie dog. Granted, this is off a rest, but it goes a long way to bolster a shooter's confidence before hitting the field after live quarry!

range shooter needs to exercise some

restraint and common sense.

So, my position on longrange hunting? Even though my preference is to get in close to my quarry, in some situations a long shot is the most practical option. Today's guns and ammo are capable, but have to be thoroughly validated before going afield. The hunter has to assess conditions honestly on a given day, to determine if they are confident that they can consistently deliver pellets to the kill zone. If not, they need to dial the range back. The hunter also needs to practise under field conditions, and practise a lot, but when these requirements are fulfilled, long-range shots on game are viable, effective, and ethical.



on quarry. I want a light trigger that breaks crisply, and consistently. The gun should cycle smoothly and allow the magazine to be indexed without the shooter's head being lifted, which is especially useful when working with a spotter calling shots.

The projectiles I prefer for longrange applications are heavier (relative to calibre) Diabolo-style, round-nose pellets. Out of a high-energy gun, magnification isn't required and I don't want to carry a lot of extra weight.

Regardless, for this type of shooting, mil dots or a multiple aim-point system is required, and if you don't have this you should not be going along.

## Stability

A bench rest might be the most stable, but for the airgunner on the move it is not practical. I find a very heavy and

"my preference is to get in close to my quarry, in some situations a long shot is the most practical option"

these are accurate, retain energy well enough, and have a good terminal performance. An additional benefit is that after 100 yards, the loss of energy and concurrent fall-off in travel means you won't be flinging lead a mile down-range as you would with a rimfire.

On most of my hunting guns I prefer a 3-9x40 scope because higher

stable bipod, such as the Gorilla Bipod Shooting Stick works the best. You can set them up quickly, lean your weight on them, and they allow the shooter to lock up into a very stable position. I don't use gun-mounted bipods because I find them more difficult to deploy in the field, and they don't offer much flexibility.

The effect of windage and elevation



Left inset: .35 at 100 yards on prairie dog target, first 10 in, last 5 as POI started

Left: My system works and I can prove it



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# AIRGUN GURU



I'm fairly new to HFT (and loving it), and have received conflicting advice from a couple of club members on the subject of pellet preparation. One of the members tells me that he inspects and weighs individual pellets, sorts them into batches with a 0.2 grain tolerance, then washes them in hot soapy water, before lubricating them, but his mate uses them straight from the tin.

I've been watching their scores in recent weeks, and they're normally within a point or two of each other, which makes me wonder whether the one who goes to so much trouble with his pellets is wasting his time. What does GURU think?

GURU SAYS: The pads of our fingertips are very sensitive, and we can usually tell by feel alone if a pellet is misshapen, although it's worth getting into the habit of giving each pellet a quick visual inspection before loading

Good-quality pellets usually weigh within 4% to 5% of the average, and a few tenths of a grain won't generally make a

huge difference in trajectory, so if you want to weigh pellets, perhaps just weeding out the few very lightest and heaviest will suffice.

It seems that people wash pellets because they find tiny fragments of lead at the bottom of empty tins, but whether washing is necessary is debatable, because gravity separates the pellets from any swarf in the tin, so it doesn't really need washing out. Lubricating pellets helps keep the barrel clean, and prevent a build-up of lead in the grooves, which can



Post your letters to: Letters, Air Gunner, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EG

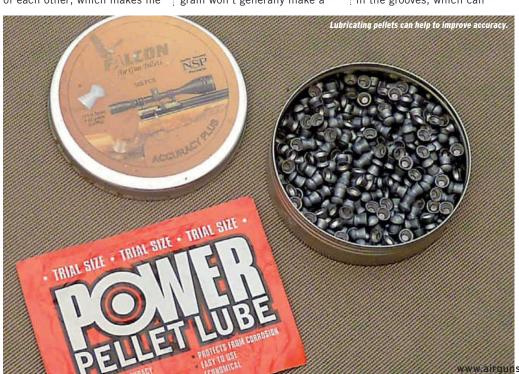
phill.price@archant.co.uk

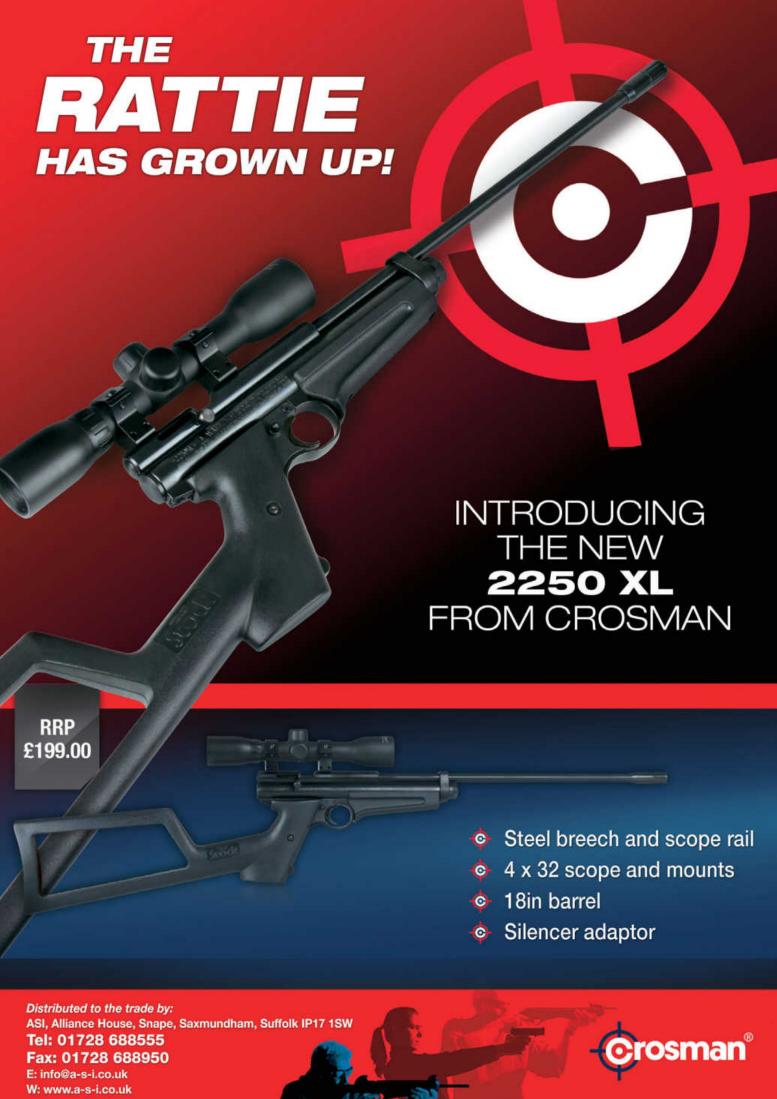
GURU TIP:Only the parts of the pellet that contact the bore need lubricant. By putting some onto a cloth and rolling the pellets in it, you can be sure to apply it where it's needed."

otherwise reduce accuracy. I read some test results on the effect on accuracy from pellet lubrication a few years ago, and the conclusion was that not only did it help accuracy and slightly increase pellet ballistic coefficient, but also that not every pellet needed to be lubricated, just every third or fourth, because each lubricated pellet leaves traces of lubricant in the barrel. That means you don't need to lubricate the entire side surface of each pellet to get the full effect.

It's possible that the main advantage of pellet preparation is actually psychological, and boosts the user's confidence. which is the single greatest aid to accuracy. By the same token, of course, the person who is utterly convinced that pellet preparation is unnecessary is equally confident in shooting unsorted pellets! Perhaps that's why your two club members, with such very different approaches to pellet preparation, achieve such very similar scores.

Next month I'll look at types of pellet lubricant, and how to use them.





# FAIR TRADE

Charlie Portlock finds a way of making his quarry work for him

"I think a paunched, jointed, fully-grown rabbit is worth a dozen eggs"

Returning from an evening's shooting recently, I stopped at a local smallholding to pick up some eggs,. I normally just leave the change in the tin, but Nigel, the egg man, was out tending his prehistoric breed of Soay sheep and we stopped for a chat about foxes, laying habits and rabbit stews. Towards the end of the conversation, he posed what might be one of the oldest questions in human discourse, 'Do you want to trade?' - a light bulb moment.

The next morning saw me up half an hour before sunrise, brewing a flask of coffee and walking the 40 minutes to my favourite stalking ground. There's something quietly mesmerising about dawn, especially a warm one in summer, and the damp air was heavy with the sounds and smells of the stirring countryside. With a surprisingly strong wind on my face, I stalked downhill through open pasture towards a rabbit feeding by some coppiced hazel. By making use of a large ash tree, I was able to get to within 20 yards undetected - unusually close and a necessity given the wind - and I took a clean head shot from the sitting position that's my favoured platform for the 97K.

## Hungry boy

By this time, I was getting hungry again so I drove up to Nigel's and

Main: Ready to depart

with the rabbit and happily returned home with six duck eggs for my second breakfast. I think a paunched, jointed, fully-grown rabbit is worth a dozen eggs, but I was happy with this exchange for a smaller animal in the skin because it saved me the trouble of preparing it, and besides, I was too hungry to haggle!

knocked the gate, presented him

Even more valuable than the food was this new connection with a neighbour. I'd discovered the simple pleasure of bartering with a like-

Right: What came first, the pellet of the egg?



Above: Get back to

Above left: ...and for my next trick...

# "the ability to shoot, dress, and cook wild game successfully is something to be respected"

minded human being, rather than finding an 'unauthorised item in the bagging area'. In addition, there was the knowledge that Nigel's small flush of ducks live an excellent, free-range life, eating naturally and wandering where they please. They also taste better than any shop-bought egg ever could, and as I eat 14 of them a week, this was an experience that I was keen to repeat. However, as I don't own the land that I hunt on, I wondered if it was good form to trade my quarry like this, so I emailed the head keeper. He was very happy for me to do whatever I liked with the meat, but in a small rural community people tend to talk, and I didn't want to give the impression that I was trading game left, right and centre, or unduly profiting from my shooting.

## A word of warning

The bartering that I'm proposing occurs irregularly and doesn't involve any money changing hands, so if you only plan on the occasional gifting or exchanging of your quarry with neighbours, friends and family, for

private consumption, you'll have no legal worries. However, if you plan on selling game then you'll need to take a level II qualification in Food Safety & Hygiene and register as a food business with your local authority.

Whilst I'd recommend doing the online qualification, regardless of your plans (less than £15.00), there are other concerns that you should be aware of when exchanging game, so try to read the Wild Game Guide available on the food.gov.uk website, which will give you an idea of where you stand legally, as well as providing quidance on the kind of food safety measures we should all be taking when preparing wild game for the pot. Whatever you're doing, have a chat with the landowner as a matter of courtesy, and make sure that what you're doing is safe, hygienic and legal. The last thing you want is for somebody you know to get ill from eating meat that you've provided.

#### A valuable skill set

Airgun hunters have an enviable set of skills. For many people, the





Left: It's a fair trade

Background: Another beautiful summer

Below: An unorthodox but stable position

"we found ourselves perfectly positioned within a many mounded and tussock strewn pasture"

ability to shoot, dress and cook wild game successfully is something to be respected, and I've had very positive conversations with the vegetarians I know who tend to admire, rather than admonish, when they hear about the way that I source my meat - I don't buy any!

One friend who'd done a lot of garden gunning but had never hunted is also a bespoke carpenter and a fine amateur chef. Another idea was forming; I needed a new set of shelves of a certain size but was keen to keep the price down. Could a skills exchange work here? If an up-cycled, pine bookshelf is worth £100.00 how much would an afternoon's shooting, stalking and field dressing instruction be worth, including, rifle, clothing, ammunition and food?

Before I could suggest this plan I needed to speak to the head keeper again. Bartering rabbits is one thing, but having an armed stranger on your land is quite another. Although I didn't feel it necessary to mention the shelves, I did tell him about my friend, Begg, his line of work, his experience of shooting etc., and our proposed time, date and location. The answer; 'Yes, no problem'.

We both managed to clear an afternoon in the diary when we spent a few hours on the garden range shooting from different positions, some more exotic than others, and trying some simulated stalking. After tea we did some more serious analysis of Begg's effective hunting distance by placing 1.5" spinners at 20, 25 and 30 yards, respectively, and shooting from a supported sitting position. We advanced the range by five yards once he could hit the target five times out of five, three times in a row with a rest in between. He discovered a natural affinity with the 95K that confirmed his effective hunting range at 25 vards.

### Into the field

Rain was forecast so we renewed the beeswax caulking in the gap between the action and the stock on both rifles. It's usually fruitless to shoot in the rain because everything is trying to keep dry - apart from hares, it seems - but rabbits don't mind a bit of drizzle, and doing this prevented water getting into the places that an oily rag can't reach.

We set off at 7.30pm, and so still had a good two hours of shooting

ahead, although it took us an hour's slow walk to get to some of the estate's oldest warrens - and it rained hard, forcing us to take cover under a trailer in a freshly harvested wheat field. As we waited for the downpour to clear, we optimistically set out some 2D pigeon decoys, but more for fun than anything else because even in the sodden shadow of the trailer's belly we stood out a mile as we drank coffee and ate boiled eggs.

As dusk gathered, we found ourselves perfectly positioned within a many mounded and tussock strewn pasture, the fence on our flank and a light breeze on our faces. As a safety precaution we'd agreed for both rifles to remain cocked and loaded, but to take it in turns to lead, with only the lead rifle ever being raised, the other man using the rangefinder and relaying the range with soft bird whistles and hand signals - our faces were covered by nets. When we crawled, we did so side by side with the rifles supported in the crook of the biceps and elbows, barrels facing in opposite directions.

After two misses at two separate rabbits, and in a rapidly failing light, Begg redeemed himself by engaging the IR on the Hawke scope and slowly crawling through 20 yards of sunken ground to take a sitting 26-yard shot at a large doe on the pasture boundary. Although I was ready for a follow-up, from a wizened hawthorn, it proved unnecessary, and the smile on my friend's face said it all. He just couldn't wait to build those shelves and come back for more shooting upon installation!

### Making a beeline

Now that I'm able use my shooting as a way of acquiring eggs and furniture, I'm looking further afield. I'm a keen mead drinker - the globe's oldest alcoholic drink - and I need a lot of honey and advice in order to begin making my own. I'm not sure how many jars of honey I'll get for a brace of rabbits, but I'm going to find out. If you're a hunter, you'll already have the opportunity to trade your quarry or kitchen creations, and if you're still seeking shooting ground then have a think about what you can offer in return for the privilege. Remember, where there's a warren there's a way! I can't stop; I'm off to call the beekeeper - barter hard!



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IN GERMANY



























# The editor gets back on his hobby horse about binoculars

know I say it all the time, but hunters, especially airgun hunters, need to use binoculars. You'll always be more effective if you can spot your quarry from a distance and then make a plan to work closer, using whatever cover is available to you. Even if that particular stalk fails, you'll have mentally logged which parts of your permission hold quarry. Further, when you try using bins' you'll be amazed by just how often you'll spot a squirrel in the fork of a tree or a magpie behind some weeds.

In the past, people have listed all the reasons that they won't carry binoculars; they're too heavy, too bulky, they slow me down, I can see well enough without them, they're too expensive, they go wrong in bad weather, I wear glasses ... and I have good, solid answers why those objections are wrong.

Main: It's such a goodlooking gun, there's no wonder they're selling well

Below: Loading is very satisfying in a metallic way



They're too heavy.

I have some small folding bin's that fit into a shirt pocket - your lunch sandwich weighs more. That being said, I do prefer full-size models for their optical performance and the fact that they're steadier to hold. A pair of modern 8x42s worn around the neck are hardly noticeable and the Hawke Endurance pair weighs just over 600 grams, so are very light.

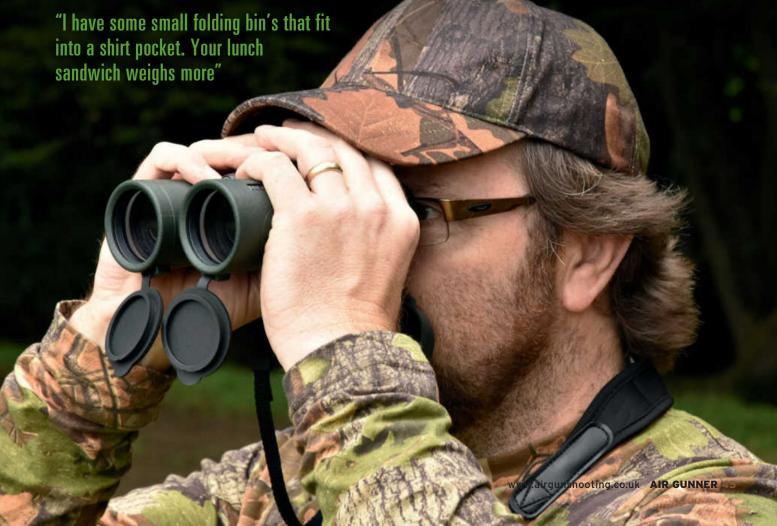
## They're too bulky.

Again look at the picture. They're less than 4½" wide and 6" long, so will fit into the cargo pocket of most shooting coats when not needed.

## They slow me down.

Fantastic! Buy them for that reason alone. Moving slowly is exactly what hunters need to learn. There's an old saying that goes, 'Your quarry is as likely to be where you are, as where you're going.' If you stand still and search the land and trees around, you might well find a squirrel or a







pigeon within shooting range. Had you walked on you'd probably have scared it off. The rule is 'use your feet less and your eyes more', especially enhanced eyes.

# I can see well enough without them.

No, you can't.

#### They're too expensive.

How much was that rifle, scope, rangefinder, camo suit? Don't tell me a couple of hundred pounds is too much to pay when it could transform your shooting. The bins' in the pictures retail at £189.99 and come with a 10-year guarantee. If you don't lose them/run them over/drop them in a river, they may well last you for life, which makes them cheaper than chips.

## They go wrong in bad weather.

Hawke quarantees their Endurance bins' against fogging, for 10 years. The quality of the construction and the clever seals ensure that once all the air has been purged by nitrogen, there's absolutely no moisture inside that could fog up the lenses. Even dunked in a pond, the waterproofing will keep everything inside bone dry. The all-metal construction is covered in thick, durable rubber, making them shockproof and they can take the rough and tumble of hunting and still come up smiling. I have to confess to having dropped a few pairs of modern binoculars and none failed, even when dropped on a hard surface.

### I wear glasses.

So do I, so don't worry. Modern

Main: The 'blued steel' finish looks exactly like the real thing

Left: With the hammer at half cock, the loading gate opens to accept the cartridges

Below: The singleaction trigger was first class binoculars have adjustable eye cups that screw in and out so that we glasses-wearers get exactly the same view as everybody else. These are covered in soft rubber so there's no chance they'll damage your lenses.

There really are no reasons not to use binoculars. How many times have you wandered all around your permission and failed to see anything?

Too many, I'll bet. If you'd slowed down and studied well ahead, I'm sure there would have been quarry around - but if they saw/heard/smelled you coming, they'd have been off well before you arrived.

The Hawke Endurance 8x42 in the photos is just right for airgunners, in my view. They give remarkable performance for the money, probably better than bin's costing twice as much 10 years ago. Like all technological products you get so much more for your money today. They're strong and reliable, of that there's no question.

As I sit in my study writing this, I can see the leaves shaking in my English damson tree at the end of the garden. I can't see who is eating all my delicious fruit, but through the binoculars I can see three woodpigeons, a magpie and a bloody squirrel. I've never seen squirrels in my garden before. The naked eye can see some leaves shake, but through the Endurance binoculars I can clearly see the kill zones, so please excuse me, I have a job to do once I get the qun safe open ...

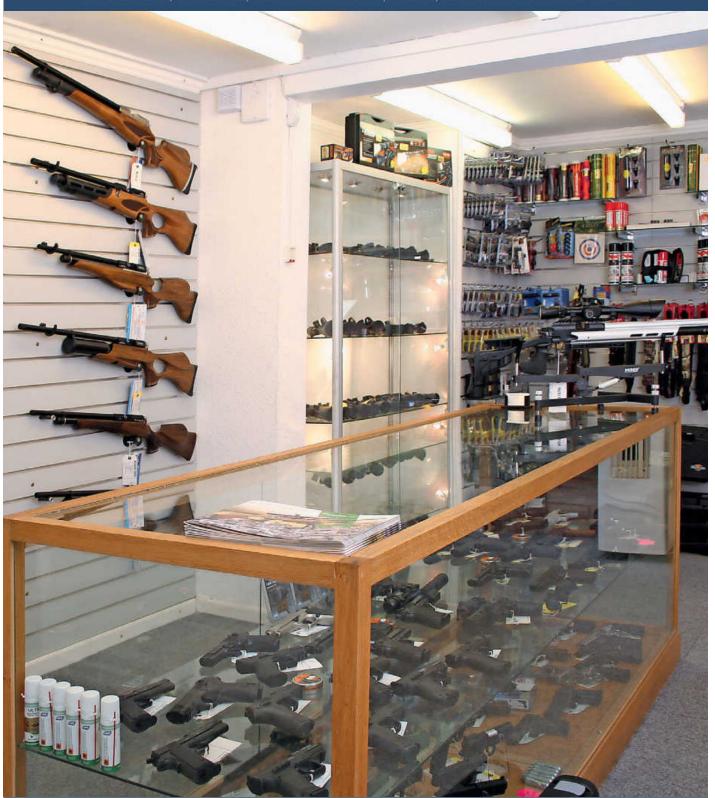
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# YOU CAN WIN!

This month's big test rifle impressed the editor no end with its compact dimensions, light weight and top-class performance. The Ultra SE action is well proven in the field, and the winning gun will be wearing the matte green synthetic stock. This offers fantastic handling in a tough, weatherproof package that also acts as free camouflage

# **ENTRY FORM**

This is a snippet from a picture printed elsewhere in this issue. Can you spot which page it's on?



I've spotted the shot on page...

Address .....

Postcode Daytime Tel

Prize to be sent to: (Name and address of your local gunshop)

Postcode.....

If you are under 18, an adult must sign on your behalf and give his/her name and address

ess .....

Closing date: Tuesday 25th October 2015

Tick if you have a subscription to Air Gunner
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Send your answers to: September Jigsaw, Air Gunner, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, RG40 2EC

# A BSA ULTRA SE RIFLE, SCOPE, MOUNT & SILENCER COMBO WORTH £650!



# HOW TO ENTER

#### **By Post**

Check out the jigsaw piece printed on the entry form below and see if you can spot from which main photo elsewhere in this edition it has been taken. When you have found the full picture, write down the page number on which it appears in the answer box below and send your completed entry form to the address at the bottom of the page. Entry costs just £1.50 per go - cheque and postal orders payable to Air Gunner - and you can enter as many times as you like. As a bonus though, for every five entries you submit, you get another one free - i.e. six entries for £7.50

Closing date for entries is Tuesday 25th of October one entry free provided the entry form is submitted with a validated 'Free Competition entry' token from their membership pack. Multiple entries allowed. If you do not wish to destroy your copy of the magazine you can send your entry on a separate piece of paper. Photocopies are also allowed. In the event of a tie, all correct entries will be put into a hat and there will be a draw to decide the winner. Prize is supplied on behalf of Air Gunner by the manufacturer. The prize will be sent to the winner's designated gun shop which may levy an administration charge for handling.





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## The editor torture tests Gerber's latest multi-tool

ulti-tools are fantastically useful and I'm seldom found without one. They're on hand for any one of dozens of small jobs I do every day, but you have to remember that they're a compromise. To make them compact enough to carry easily, they cannot be as strong as individual tools, and this is most clearly seen in the cutters. Most multi-tools are stainless steel, which is great for most things, but it cannot be hardened like the steel used in heavy-duty cutters. For this reason, your multi-tool cutters will work well on copper wire, or soft iron wire, like you use for gardening, but hard wire as used in fencing is too tough and will damage the edges.

## Carbon steel

The MP1 stands out in this field because the pliers are forged from high-carbon steel, rather than being cast in stainless, as other multitools are. Gerber claims that these are very strong, so a torture test was demanded. I should note that the pliers are sprung, which makes them easy to operate. As expected, copper wire was no challenge so I took on some chain-link fence and, as promised, the MP1 cut right through. I tried some thicker wire, which

defeated it, but I checked carefully and it did no damage to the cutting edges. That's seriously impressive for a multi-tool and makes the MP1 something quite special.

There are 14 tools in total, comprising the usual plain blade, serrated blade, screwdrivers and bottle openers, but there are some unusual and interesting ones as well. There's a female socket that accepts standard driver bits, which is such a good idea. You can select all the bits that your gun might need, such as hex and Allen drivers, and travel light. Next, I was impressed to see that they've added what the Americans call a 'pry-bar', in other words, a tool for levering things. Many knives are ruined every day being used to pry things apart when they were never designed for that purpose. It speaks of Gerber's confidence in the construction of the MP1, because they're inviting trouble with this, so it had better be as strong as it looks. Another innovative blade is a short chisel, which is sharp along one edge as well as the end.

### **G10**

The handles are made from a high-tech composite, G10, which is very tough and also resistant to oil, water and

Top: A belt pouch is included

Main: This is the first multi-tool I've used that has really strong cutters

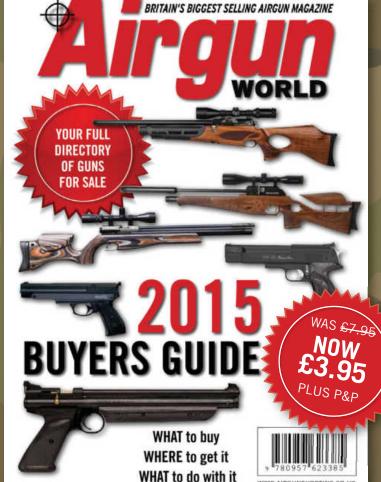
Below: There's an innovative choice of blades such as i've never seen before general grime, so is a good choice, in my eyes. The overall construction is quite bulky and it has a more industrial feel than some other multi-tools, like Leatherman, which will appeal to some but not others. The two main blades can be opened with one hand, but strangely, the plain edge is right-handed while the serrated one is a lefty. All the tools lock and it's a two-handed operation to unlock and pack them away.

The MP1 stands out in a crowded market for its strength and cutting ability. Only time will tell how it holds up to such hard use, but if you're tough on your kit then I recommend having a look at one of these fine tools.

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# MIRACLE OIL?

# Can you use gun oil on a cut hand? The Editor finds out

hen I first heard the claims made by Ballistol, I have to confess that I thought it was a joke. Gun oil that works on metal, wood, leather ... and if you have a skin cut you can use it to aid healing. Surely, they were pulling my leq?

The story of how this remarkable product came about interested me. At the turn of the 20th century, the German Imperial Army began looking for a multi-purpose oil that could be used to clean and maintain the metallic parts of a rifle, whilst also protecting its wooden stock and a soldier's leather gear. To develop this oil, the Army contracted with Friedrich Klever and his son, Dr. Helmut Klever, a professor of chemistry at the Technical

University of Karlsruhe.

In 1904, Dr. Helmut Klever succeeded in producing the special compound, which he named 'Ballistol' (from the words 'ballistic' and 'oleum', the Latin word for oil). It soon became obvious that this new ballistic oil had some impressive capabilities, and in 1905, the Imperial Army tested and adopted Ballistol, which stayed in use until 1945. By then, however, word had spread and within a decade, hunters, boaters, hikers, and outdoorsmen in Germany. Austria and Switzerland had converted to using this new 'miracle' oil.

It's made from pharmaceutical grade ingredients that are completely harmless to the environment and us, both in use and in the disposal. They even make dedicated skin-care products from the same ingredients, but I didn't see rough, tough outdoors people wanting to know about them.

I asked the UK office for some

samples, which I'll be testing over the winter to see for myself just how good it is. They claim the oil will work on nearly anything - your gun to window latches - so I'll be sure to test that out. They make some other products, too, which I think will be useful to airgunners, such

as insect repellent, and fabric waterproofer.

The great news for anybody interested in these products is that I have a selection to give away to Air Gunner readers. Please turn to page 78 where you'll find my latest reader survey. Simply complete it and post it back to me and I'll enter your name into a draw from which five lucky readers will receive a goody bag of Ballistol products to test for themselves.

TESTSIEG



Above: One bottle of lubricant for a thousand jobs

Above: The Ballsitol range is surprisingly large

"They claim the oil will work on nearly anything - your gun to window latches"







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# HW30

flattened and ground, still had very sharp edges where it had been ground. These sharp edges could dig in and score the mainspring guide, so I removed them with a grinding tool in a Dremmel rotary tool, and then smoothed and polished both of the end faces.

2 I measured the internal diameter of the mainspring at 12.8mm and the outside of the spring guide at 11.7mm diameter. This gives a running clearance of 1.1mm. I then decided to make a new mainspring guide from steel, on my lathe, and make it a nice, tight fit inside the mainspring.

3 I put a smear of Moly grease on the mainspring guide, on the front and rear of the piston and on the sides of the piston seal.

Make sure that none at all goes on the front of the seal.

The piston is now fitted back into the compression chamber with the cocking slot lined up with the slot in the compression cylinder. Some more Moly grease along the cocking slot and the ears of the cocking link, and the link can be passed through its support bracket and re-engaged in the piston.

**5**The cocking link support bracket cross pin can be now knocked back into position.

some Moly grease on both sides of one of the barrel shims, and enter the shim as shown on the left-hand side of the action.

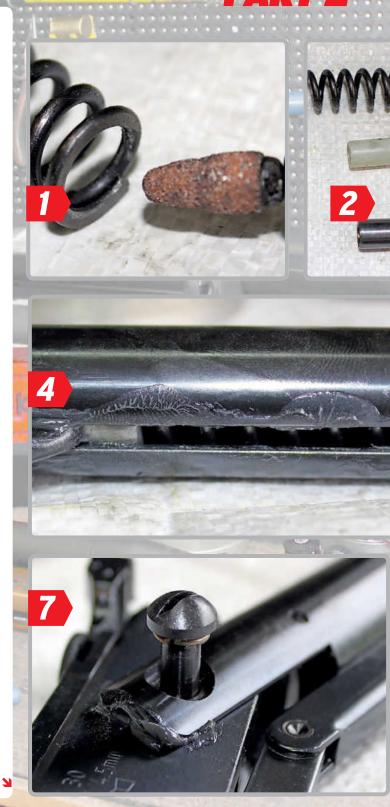
Finally, line up the holes in the barrel block, the jaws of the action and the left-hand barrel shim and enter the pivot pin through them.

Turn the action over, lube up the second barrel shim and slide it into position on the right-hand side of the action.

Once all the components have been aligned, the pivot pin can be screwed in and tightened. Tighten this pin until a slight resistance can be felt when moving the barrel through its cocking cycle.

10 Turn the action over and fit and tighten the locking nut and spring washer on the pivot pin on the right-hand side of the action.

Place the action in a spring compressor. Insert the mainspring and spring guide and the trigger block into the action. Using the spring compressor pressing on the end of the trigger block, compress the mainspring with the trigger slot lined up with the slot in the action, until the grubscrew holes are lined up and the grub-screw can be







So, for a few hours work I thing we have turned what was a very good rifle to start with, into something quite a bit better.





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# Gary Chillingworth takes a second look at an amazing rifle

he Air Arms FTP900 was released in late 2013 and since then it has become a tour de force in the target-shooting world. Over the last 18 months, it has taken myriad shooting titles including local shoots, national events and even a hard-fought world championship. The FTP900 is a true target rifle and is well regarded as one of the best

know this stunning rifle. The FTP900 is part of the new generation of air rifles, designed by experts and built by the most amazing machines to tolerances that are smaller than most human brains can fathom.

For instance, the FTP900's breech block is milled from a single piece of high-grade aluminium. Air Arms could cast this piece and it would Main: It really is a beautiful rifle Each billet starts off weighing just over 3kg, but three hours later, when the milling is complete, it weighs in at just over 500 grams and has uniformity that can be measured in microns. It is this attention to detail that makes the FTP900 the rifle that it is today.

# "I really do like the FTP900; it's a great rifle, it's accurate, reliable and well-made"

home-grown rifles ever released. I was lucky enough to be allowed a loan rifle by Air Arms last year, and I had a very pleasant 2014 getting to be much quicker and cheaper, but milling from a single billet of aluminium gives the production team a much higher precision product. Right: Happy to be holding one? - you bet!

Left: Rudy Goldslade, the 2014 World HFT Champion won an FTP for his efforts

## TIME TO BUILD

Once the breech block is milled, it's time to put this rifle together. The regulators for the FTP are placed on a test rig and anywhere up to 100 shots are sent through each one; only when it has passed this rigorous test is the reg' placed on the gun. Then it's





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attached and the barrel and cylinder are fitted, and it's time for a chrono' test. The rifles are all set up to shoot about 11.7ft.lbs., and to make sure they are fully legal and accurate, every gun is placed on a rig that shoots a 50-shot chrono' string over the Air Arms chronograph. This string is then analysed and if the variance is within limits, the rifle is placed in its stock and sent to packing.

### **COOL LAMINATE**

When you first get your FTP, the first thing you will notice is the feel. The high-quality laminate is cool to the touch and as you draw the rifle up to your cheek, you can tell that it's a premium product. One of the things I love about FTP is the



smooth side lever. You pull it back, the bolt and pellet probe retreat in the breech block, and you then thumb the pellet directly into the barrel. This is a great idea, because putting a pellet into a loading tray can cause issues, especially if it is raining and the loading channel is full of water. You then push the cocking lever forward and the pellet probe pushes the pellet gently into the barrel. Once the pellet is seated, the back half of the bolt pushes against the probe and, using spring pressure, makes a perfect seal. This two-stage process helps to ensure that the pellets don't get damaged and are always centred in the barrel perfectly, which will, of course, help Top: Gary Morrison shot his PB with an FTP

Above left: Air Arms has invested heavily in top-class people and equipment

Above right: The regulator test rig is a work of art

Right: Keiran Turner, the 2008 HFT World Champion knows his rifles accuracy.

Over the years, I have banged on about getting a rifle that fits you, but the FTP has sort of made this a moot point. The gorgeous laminate stock is made by Minelli and is completely adjustable. The cheek riser and hamster are adaptable for height, rotation and rake; the trigger is fully adjustable and there is even the ability to fine-tune the power - but only up to 12ft.lbs. This means that no matter how you like your rifle set up, the FTP can be adjusted to fit.

So, with this all in mind, how was the rifle to shoot? Well, this is where I have to make an apology and also put my hands up to not giving the FTP900 the test it truly deserved. In 2014 I had a terrible year, I shot very badly and to be honest, there were times when I thought about giving up, but this was not down to the FTP. As many of you know, I am a train driver by night and an airgun hack by day. Unfortunately, a few years back I was involved in a fatal accident when driving my train, and in 2014 I was returning to main-line driving after a period of illness caused by the incident, and even though I was trying hard with my shooting, I could not give it and the FTP the commitment it deserved. The thing is, though, going through this showed me what a great company Air Arms is. They could see my scores were bad and instead of calling me up and asking for their gun back, they let me continue and to work through my issues, so thanks to Claire and the team at Air Arms.

Luckily, however, there have been shooters like Rudy Goldslade and Charles Peel who have taken the



HFT world by storm with the FTP. Whenever these guys turn up at a Southern Hunters, National, or a SiHFT shoot, you can be sure that the pair of them will be in the top placings. In fact, only two days ago at round 7 of the Sussex interclub shoots. Charles destroyed the Ford Ranges course with a stunning 59 on a blustery day. To be honest, if you look at the last 14 rounds of the UKAHFT national series, an FTP has either won or has had equal top score in a guarter of the events, and if you add in the Worlds, where Vinny Holland became World Champion, then this goes up to almost a third. Rudy is, of course, the youngest person ever to win an HFT world championship, and at the tender age of just 15 he showed us all how bad we truly are - and Vince has only been shooting for a few years. When I asked him about his FTP900, he told me that this rifle had helped him become a better shooter because it was consistent and predictable, and that is what everyone looks for in a target gun.

## **MODS MADE**

When you look at the FTPs that belong to Rudy and Charles, you will notice that they do not look standard; both have removed the front 'A' clamp, along with the shroud and muzzle brake, which takes a lot of weight from the front of the rifle. Now, it is a credit to Air Arms that they have never complained about this and the fact that the rifle is designed to make it easy to modify is why it is so popular in the target-shooting world. There are, however, many who like to use the FTP as God



extend the butt hook for a full FT-style riq.

There is no doubt that the FTP900 has done everything that Air Arms wanted it to do. At the beginning of 2015, three HFT world champions were using the rifle; Kieran Turner, Rudy Goldslade and Vince Holland, and I have no doubt that there will be many more champs to follow.

A little reminder, however; when you get your gun, read the manual. The early rifles had a few issues with bits of '0' ring from the filling probe seals being broken off and getting stuck in the filler valve and regulator, which is why every FTP is supplied with some lube for the 0 rings, but we men never read the manual and it clearly states, 'lube the '0' ring'. Also, the FTP is a big gun and if weight is an issue for you as a shooter, take a look at the HFT500 the FTP's little

# "One of the things I love about FTP is the cocking mechanism, which is a silky-smooth side lever"

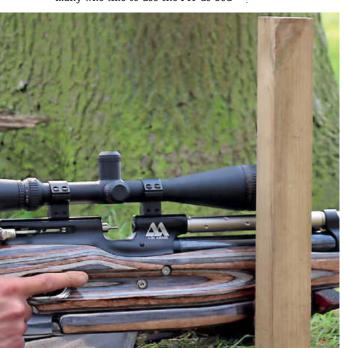
Above: The supertechnical butt pad has every adjustment you could want

Right: Miriam Stark shows that the balance of the FTP is second intended, and Gary Morrison used a stock FTP to take his 3rd place in round 4 of the UKAHFT at Wendover, and if the FTP can turn Gary into a great shooter, then the gun must be almost magical.

Basically, what I am saying is that no matter how you like your rifle, you can make an FTP fit. If you want a Sporter, remove the stripper and A clamp, as well as the hamster, and you will have a Sporter-style rifle - this is the configuration that Rudy used at the English open, to win the Open class - or leave it together and

sister. I will be looking at the HFT500 in a few months.

I admit it - I really do like the FTP900. It's a great rifle, it's accurate, reliable and well made and I wish I could have done it justice. When I move around the HFT world, everyone I speak to loves the look and the feel, and even though it may not always be the gun for them, everyone I know acknowledges that it's the gun of the moment. If you are looking for a full-on target rifle, then the FTP900 should be at the top of your shopping list!







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# AIRGUN VS SHOTGUN

Jamie Chandler proves the airgun's worth in the pest control field

From the beginning of time, when our ancestors quibbled over who had the best club in the cave, rivalries forged innovation, driving the human race forward. Great rivalries have dominated sports through history; Ferrari v McLaren in Formula 1, Mohammed Ali v Joe Frazer in boxing, and the mighty rivalry between Tim Neild and Adam Taylor, two of the greatest modern Wellie Wangers at the official Wellie Wanging World Championships in Upperthong Village, Today, I aim to put right one such rivalry; shotgun v legal-limit air rifle. For too long, the airgun has been the underdog against its louder, brash rival and I will prove that, in terms of pest control, the airgun can happily hold its own - I hope. In the shotgun corner, weighing in with a Beretta Silver Pigeon 12 bore and 32g no. 5 cartridges, we have Tom, the farmer, a keen, driven-game shooter

and shotgun enthusiast. In the airgun corner is me, and taking it back to airgunning's earlier routes, with a springer, my trusty .22 Weirhauch HW97 with a Hawke 3-9 x 50 Airmax EV scope.

## Fair play

For fair play, we decided that the competition should be 1½ hours, pigeon shooting over stubble, with 20 minutes 'down time' to let things settle after set-up, using the same set of 20 decoys to ensure that it was the guns and fieldcraft. Tom won the coin toss, and chose to go first, setting up an ent hide on the side of some rape stubble on his farm, under a flight line he had been watching for a couple of days.

Along with airguns, I also love pigeon decoying with a shotgun and the opportunity for banter, so joining Tom as a spotter was fantastic fun. Background : Out in the stubble the decays showed well

Bottom left: Once Tom put his coat on he scared fewer birds away

Bottom right: The

Tom had chosen a strong spot with pigeons coming in following two flight lines, potentially offering good sport. Today though, the pigeons were toying with him, staying on the further reaches of his shooting, jinking when they caught site of his ruddy face and white shirt standing out from the hedgerow, like a bacon sandwich at a vegetarian convention. As the clock ticked well in to his first 45 minutes, the shot count rose like he was being sponsored by Hull Cartridges, but winged menaces bagged remained squarely at zero. I would have suggested he covered up a bit at the start, but braggers' rights were at stake! At about the halfway mark, and the excuse bag in danger of requiring a flatbed lorry to haul it a strong preeze bought out Tom's jacket and things started to turn.

A long, slow, laxily dropping crop, robber came in right to left. Tom left.

for too long the airgun has been the underdog against its louder, brash rival"



it until at about 30 yards and in one fluid motion, he stood, swung and fired, the pigeon dropping perfectly to bolster the pattern; he was off the mark. Number two followed in under a minute at 25 yards, again landing into the pattern. If this continued, then I was going to have my work cut out. The timer moved into the last half hour, then a flurry of 50+ and Tom showed his true skill as a driven shooter, picking off two challenging high birds off four shots, followed by a final couple in the last few minutes. A slow start, but certainly a testament to some fine shooting at the end, and the

bar had been set at six.

With Tom needing to go

and actually do some

farming, I was

left alone

following day to get on with my go, whilst Tom timed me remotely, and called when I had to stop.

### On the deck

To decoy with an airgun, you obviously need to get the pigeons to land to have a shot, so everything has to be right from your fieldcraft to the place you choose. I chose wheat stubble, cut the day before, because it offered far lower stalks than the rape, and

instead of a net hide I
tucked myself back
in to a hedgerow,
using Jack Pyke
Woodland camo,
face net, natural
foliage and shadow
to obscure me. I
set out my
decoy

Below: Think you're better than me?

Bottom left: Lots of noise but ...

Bottom right: I used natural cover, shade and camo, rather than build a hide pattern in a clumsy horseshoe, and used them also to mark distances from 15 – 30 yards, then I let things settle and called Tom to start timing. With the promise of fresh eating, the winged menaces were out in force, but getting them to land was by no means quaranteed.

My first opportunity came just five minutes in, swooping down from the right to land at the head of the pattern. Following with the rifle, I had the scope on it in a second and took the shot, but in my excitement pulled to the right, missing by a mile. The grey gobbler headed skyward as two more fell into the pattern, and this is where I discovered my Achilles heel. Having no hands, an under-lever springer is slower for me to load than others, and requires more movement; add to that dropping

30-odd pellets, and a rethink was in order. Calling a pause,

"my Jack Pyke Woodland camo, face net, natural foliage and shadow to obscure me"

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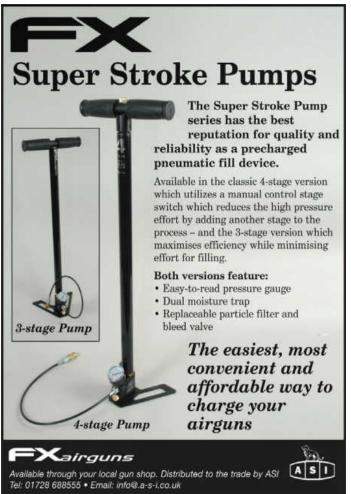
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# STIGHT Country of Kitchen 12 CHINESE RABBIT

# Jane Price adds an oriental twist to our favourite quarry

n a recent trip to Malaysia, I really enjoyed trying lots of local cuisine; dishes with rice, noodles, different meats, vegetables, and sauces packed with flavour. Malaysian food is influenced by Indian, Thai and Chinese, and nearly every meal is served with rice. On my last night in Kuala Lumpur, I enjoyed a Chinese meal with friends and this recipe reminds me of the short time I spent in Malaysia, and my feeble attempts at using chopsticks. The last few months have seen a huge increase in the rabbit population on the farms where Phill shoots, and unlike last month, he has been out

and returned triumphant. Once the rabbits were converted from fluffy animals into a few joints of meat on a plate, I could see they were quite big and would easily feed four people. If you don't have any rabbits, feel free to use chicken thighs instead, which are really juicy and don't need to be cooked in liquid before going into the frying

Egg-fried rice is really easy to put together and looks much more interesting in a bowl than plain boiled rice. You can add any chopped vegetables, including spring onions, mushrooms, and sweetcorn.

- 2) Cook in the oven for an hour on a medium heat (180°C).
- 3) Discard the cooking juices and allow the rabbit to cool for a few minutes.
- 4) Remove the meat from the bones while still warm.
- 5) Heat the olive oil in a frying pan, add the rabbit and sesame seeds and cook for 5 minutes
- 6) Add the soy sauce and the sweet chilli sauce.
- Rice 1) Put the rice, water and salt into a pan and boil for 10 minutes, or until cooked.
- 2) Drain the rice and leave
- 3) Beat the eggs with the
- 4) In a wok, heat the olive oil and add the peas and cooked
- 5) Cook until heated through, stirring to prevent sticking.
- 6) Push the rice to one side and add the egg mixture. Allow the egg to cook for 10 seconds before mixing into the
- 7) Serve immediately





#### **TIP FROM JANE**

When you remove the meat from the bone after cooking in the liquid, make sure the meat has not been allowed to go

completely cold because this will make it more difficult. Be careful to remove all the really small hones.



Above: Remove the meat from the bones

Right: Rub the 5 spice into the uncooked meat

Left: Just a few ingredients are needed for this recipe



Left: I cooked the rabbit for just an hour because they were young animals

Country of Kitchen 1



STICKY CHINESE RABBIT Ingredients serves 4	
For the rabbit	For the rice
2 rabbits, jointed	200g rice
1 tbsp Chinese 5-spice	1 pint water
1 pint water	Pinch salt
1 tbsp soy sauce	2 eggs
2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce	1 cup peas
1 tbsp olive oil	1 tbsp sesame oil
2 tbsp sesame seeds	1 tbsp olive oil



Above right: Mix the oil into the eggs very well

Right: Heat the meat in the pan and add the sesame seeds

Left: Push the rice over and add the egg

Right: Pour on a generous amount of sweet chilli sauce







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here are differing thoughts and theories about the effect an air stripper has on the pellet performance, when correctly fitted, and tuned to the barrel and pellet combination of a PCP air rifle.

Phill Price, the editor of this fine magazine, and I were talking on the phone about one of my upcoming features - he's no relation by the way, although thinking about it, my father did have a bike ... and the subject got around to the merits (or lack

of) of air strippers. Lo and behold, we had differing views! My opinion was that air strippers do work, and Phill's thinking was that they didn't, and all that was put on the end of a barrel was a weight that acted like a barrel-tuner. After a very lengthy discussion it became clear that neither of us was going to convince

Main: I've used my strippers on many guns, all with positive results

Below: I manufacture

"Another result of fitting an air stripper is a flatter pellet trajectory"

the other that their thinking was

The theory behind the concept of air strippers is that as soon as the pellet leaves the barrel, the air still behind it, which is under tremendous pressure, now accelerates and overtakes the base of the pellet. This air is turbulent and can destabilise the pellet, causing yaw and wobble. Both of these effects increase the drag of the pellet when travelling through the air. With a stripper







fitted, the pellet enters into a thinnosed cone within a short distance of leaving the muzzle; the turbulent air is then stripped off, away from the pellet by the cone, and is then vented to atmosphere.

#### Now listen here ...

I explained to Phill that independent tests have been carried out and verified, by well-respected and well-known shooters, to show that when an air stripper was fitted, and side-by-side tests carried out of bare barrel against air stripper barrel, there was a significant tightening up of long-range groups. With the wind speed at right angles to the direction of shot, and measured at 10 m.p.h. with an anemometer (wind speed indicator), the pellets took an average of 14mm less wind at 45 yards with the stripper fitted, and the pellets maintained an extra 30 to 40 fps velocity at that distance. That is an extra 1 ft.lb. maintained at 45 yards. Another result of fitting an air stripper is a flatter pellet trajectory, with most air rifles being up to three-quarters of a mil-dot flatter at 45 yards.

Strippers have been tested by independent, interested parties on many types of PCP rifles in both and .22 calibres. Some of these ide the new BSA Gold Star, which showed a significant improvement in long-range group size, consistency and accuracy. Other makes of rifle, for which owners have confirmed that strippers did all of the above are: Weihrauch 00s, Air Arms S400 series, Air s S200, Air Arms HFT500, Air Arms FTP900, Steyr LG110, and many

me, all these results told me that pellet was travelling through the air more cleanly with the stripper d, than it did with a bare barrel.

#### Used by the best

The fact that many eminent Field Target, Hunter Field Target and air rifle Bench Rest shooters, including former UK World Champions, shoot with air strippers, failed to convince our esteemed editor that they do work.

I think it is now time to 'put your money where your mouth is'. I know that Phill shoots an Air Arms S410 on a regular basis, and so I told him that I was going to make him an adjustable air stripper to fit his rifle and send it to him, and it is now up to him to prove to me that they do not work.

#### **CONSIDER THIS CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!**

Hmmm. Looks like Neil means business. I'm one of those people who likes a good theory, but until I can see the results with Next month, I'll try to see for myself if I my own eyes, I remain unconvinced. It does make sense that a pellet flying true should suffer less drag than one wobbling along, but surely the shuttlecock shape of the Diablo pellet would straighten out the flight. I hear many weird and wonderful theories and can discount most fits into this puzzle. Ed.

with common sense and experience, but this idea deserves some proper testing. can measure the difference between a bare barrel and one of Neil's strippers. He made one to fit my Air Arms S410, a gun I know like the back of my hand. At the same time, I'll also test the Air Arms silencer that I always use to see where it

Below: Finished and ready to go. Mr Price, put your money where vour mouth is ...



# READER SURVEY



Dear reader, It's important for to me to understand what it is that interests you, so that I can steer Air Gunner in the direction that most of you want, which is why I'll be offering five readers a selection of Ballistol products for simply completing and returning this survey to me.

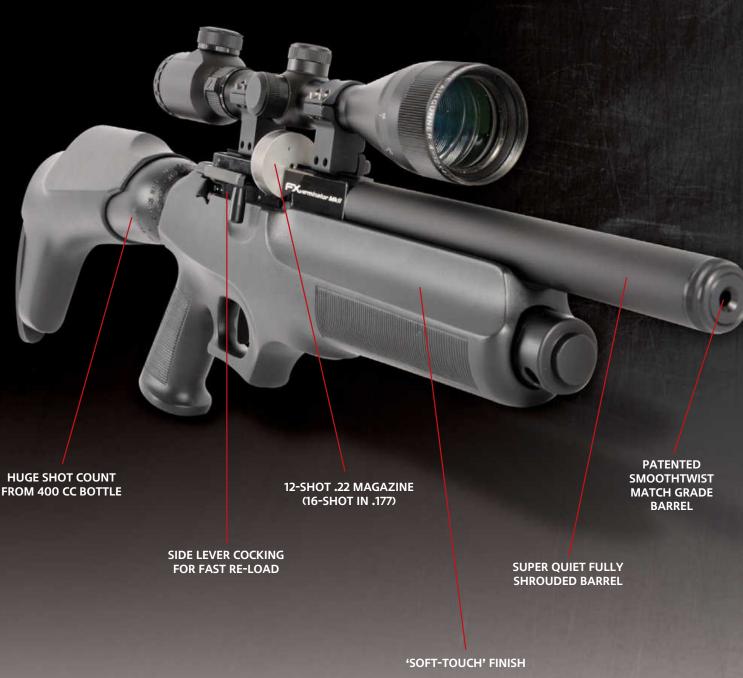
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# THE GOOD, THE BAD AND,... THE UGLY

Steve Prime whiles away some quiet moments with a

ll good articles need an interesting subject to form the basis of a good exercise well executed. I am not one to knock exercise - a brisk walk to the range to improve lower body strength or the breaking of a barrel to enhance upper body strength. To complete the day after a plink on the range, or a gruelling HFT session, I see no harm in the lifting of a well-earned pint in my local to end a perfect day.

Back home, feet up, with good movie, what could be better especially in the winter months? From the title of this article you may assume, quite correctly, that I am a Clint Eastwood fan, his Westerns



Above: Just look at how bad the pitting

Below: It's a pleasure to shoot a gun you've restored yourself

being my favourites.

Where am I going with this one? Well, I am not one for sitting still for long. I'm always looking for things to fiddle and potter with - especially cosmetics on old rifles. As I have mentioned before, I avoid taking intricate things apart because they never go back the same way as they were first intended.

So, the object of the exercise here is to fill in time giving an old rifle a

achieve a feeling of satisfaction and maybe make a few quid.

The rifle I purchased for £80 was an Original 22 in .177, a lovely junior rifle, which is light, well balanced and has a brass-lined barrel.

#### Back to the title then:

The Good - firstly, it is an air rifle and it shoots well, so the internals are okay. The price did not break the bank and it's a small bundle for future fun. It will prevent me from going stir-crazy, giving me a few hours to fulfil a hobby with very little extra cost. All the external bits are present; rear and foresights, trigger quard and stock - so we are off to a good start.

The Bad - so far this list will be a short one and that is definitely for the better. The worst possible scenario would be the internals failing or something going wrong outside my remit and confidence zone. I have been lucky this time, so let's move quickly on.

The Ugly - well I would not shell out the cash for something that was going to be appealing to the

eye after I have had time to fettle it. I suppose the well-worn stock, tarnished metal work, and pitted

blueing would fall into this header, but this is the object of the exercise so on to the final title ...

For a Few Quid More - when all is done, we can always hope to add a few pounds to the selling price. Even if we only break even, we have the self-satisfaction of knowing we have achieved a personal goal and, most of all, enjoyed the exercise (there's that word again).

"The worst possible scenario would be the internals failing"





sanding a little more on any heavy marks or divots. I do not like to see varnish that hides the beauty of the wood. Gradually work toward a finishing paper, until you are happy that you have a smooth and level finish on the wood. Before going any further, brush or blow off any sawdust particles and wipe the whole stock down with white spirit. This cleans and degreases the surface ready for the finish. I always use

pitted, with the blueing and in need of some attention, so using a fine wire wool, I gently worked on the metal, knowing full well it will not remove dents and heavy pitting, but improve dramatically the overall appearance at the end. Again, out came the white spirit (or Abbey Degreasing Spray) to clean and degrease, before coating all the metal evenly with Abbey Blueing Gel, using a fine-bristled artist's brush. Follow

gun you buy is mechanically sound and carries a good manufacturer's name so that, if need be, parts are easily obtainable, even on the older models. On that note, all that is left to say is 'happy sanding and polishing'.





Right: I appy the blueing compound slaowly and evenly

Right: Sanding should be done slowly and carefully



Below: A look of satisfaction

Below left: Stripped and ready for refinishing

## "The action and barrel areas were pitted, with the blueing in need of some attention"

good-quality walnut oil and, for best results, it is applied by hand - wearing gloves. Firstly pour a few drops into the palm of your hand and work it like soap, warming the oil before transferring it to the stock. Apply in a small circular motion until all the wood is treated. Leave to soak in for 24 hours and then repeat the process two or three times. The result is amazing and well worth the effort.

#### Metal parts

While waiting for each stage of the

the instructions; leave for about 30 seconds and rinse off carefully with cold water. Try not to let any water enter the internal components. Repeat the process two or three times for best results.

Finally, spray a little gun oil into the cocking action and spring areas to drive off any excess moisture, and reassemble the action, trigger guard and stock. Step back and admire your handiwork.

If you fancy having a go yourself, my advice would be to make sure the





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VINTAGE AIR RIFLE, Diana model, .177. Estimated date of manufacture early 1930-1940, good condition given its vintage status. Metal surface is slightly textured and wooden stock marked PR and darkened through age, £50 ovno. Tel: 0127 7355197 (Essex).

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#### AIR ARMS PRO-SPORT .22

with Hawke scope in excellent condition. £350.00. Tel: 01564 826594 (Wythall).

WALTHER LGV .22 good condition used in the field so minor knocks to stock. Chrono @ 11.5 ft.lbs., excellent gun only £350, with scope, case, lamp and filter for £470. Tel: 07946 513480 (Luton).

BSA R-10 MK2 .22, Nearly new bought three months ago, brand new. Perfect condition, comes with Hawke 4-9 x 40 IR scope, 2 new BSA .22 magazines and gun bag, Brocock Diablo pellets included. £700. Tel: 07817223162 (Woldingham).

FWB 300S, good condition, peep sights and steady rest £350. FWB 65 £275, Crosman MK1 £150. Tel: 07595 504267. See pictures on williams25@btinternet.com (

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oil finish for full length barrel. £160. Tel: 01508 558662 (Norfolk).

AIR ARMS TX200 H.C.177 MKIII as new. Mint condition. Includes Nikko Stirling 3-9 x 40 AO scope and fleece lined gun bag. Genuine reason for sale, buyer collects £275. Tel: 0161 2209327 (Manchester).

The editor reserves the right to edit adverts as may be required. Swap Shop is a service offered to readers who wish to undertake private transactions between themselves. There is no need for such transactions to be made face to face (unless an airgun is FAC-rated), but Air Gunner requests that all due caution is excercised when buying or selling an airgun. You must adhere to the current airgun laws. You can't buy an airgun if you are under 18 years old. The Swap Shop is not offered to those who sell airguns as part of a business.







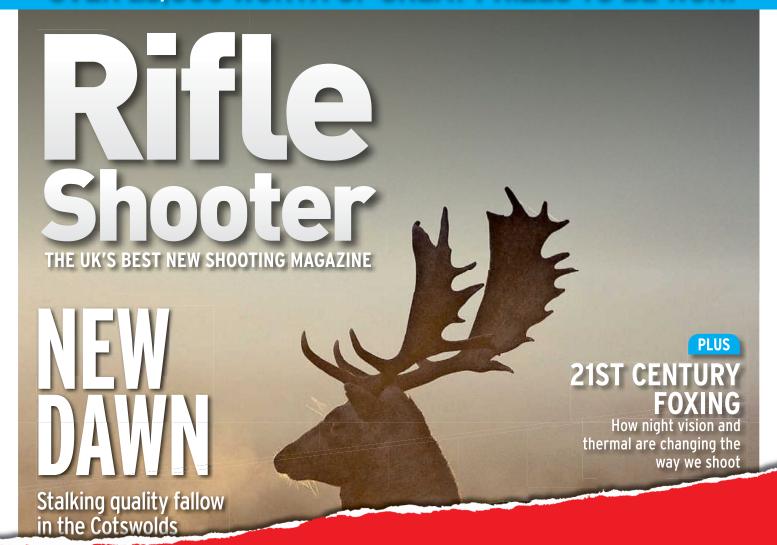








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# AIRGUNT COLLECTION

Garden Gunning Past and Future Part 1

by John Atkins Additional photograph by Chester Purllant



arden Guns are discontinued' reads the note in an unknown hand on top of the early 1970s Webley leaflet you might be able to make out below my little No. 3 bolt action Garden Gun in Figure 1. Added either at Webley & Scott before the literature was dispatched, or by a Webley representative or dealer, those four words were a sign of the times.

In order to pack more houses on to a building plot, gardens have often reduced in size and are now usually totally unsuitable for firearms of any sort - even a little No. 3 bore (9 mm) Webley Garden Gun. In the past, I have used these, plus larger .410 shotguns in large gardens, and even revolvers with a bullet catcher and suitable angled butt stop, deflecting downwards into sand on a then approved garden range of 50 years ago. Those days have long gone, of course, but I'm including some firearms in memory of them and to set the scene, because over this month and next, I aim to try to dispel the well-known myth that practice with a Webley air pistol (with it's

characteristic recoil) prepares you for firing a full-bore revolver. That's all rather hypothetical now, since the handgun ban, but nevertheless a subject I find interesting.

Whether we like it, or not, the future holds communal outside spaces for housing, rather than individual gardens, and airgun shooting in communal gardens is hardly likely to happen! Busy people have little time for gardening now, so that will suit many householders. Webley's now obsolete No. 3 bore Garden Gun was advertised as just the thing for orchard protection. Nowadays, the raiding bullfinches - a pair of which could strip a cherry tree of buds in 20 minutes flat - and other orchard pests, are now protected hirds because of conservation concerns.

Although children were often taught shooting basics with a 'No. 3 bore', they're not toys. While only for very short-range work of around 35 feet, these small shotguns should be treated with the utmost respect. If we compare one (2nd from right in Figure 2) with my two Webley .410 shotguns flanking can see it's considerable

smaller - although the barrel is still well over the minimum

legal length of 24 inches. I don't collect shotguns - all the ones I own are working tools for keeping down small vermin in various areas. From left to right: Webley Mk. III air rifle serial number 92, in .177" calibre with worn, lacquered birch stock and double-pull trigger; a single-pull trigger later version Mk. III .22 with walnut stock, numbered 21264; beech-stocked Webley .410; Webley No. 3 bore Garden Gun with stained beech stock and a birch-stocked Webley .410. Earlier Webley No. 3 Garden Guns seem to have had natural, pale beech wood like the Webley Junior air rifles - so maybe the walnut staining for both Garden Guns and the lightweight Webley air rifles started around the same period.

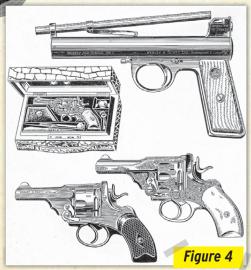
Although I referred to a BSA 'Cadet-Major' air rifle as a great 'garden gun' last month, the term 'Garden Gun' or 'Orchard Gun' was



Figure 1: Webley's No. 3 bore (9mm) obsolete Garden Gun was advertised as just the thing for orchard protection. Nowadays, the raiding bullfinches and other orchard pests are protected birds because of conservation concerns

Figure 2: Left to right: From among the first hundred Webley Mk. III air rifles produced is serial number 92, in .177" calibre with lacquered birch stock and doublepull trigger; a single-pull trigger later version Mk. III .22 with walnut stock numbered 21264; beech-stocked Webley .410; Webley No. 3 bore Garden Gun and a birch-stocked Webley .410

Figure 3: Webley's famous top-break revolver. Eventually, the Webley revolver-making machinery was



never really applied to airguns, although low-powered airguns can usually be used safely in a garden with suitable back-stop/ catcher for the pellets, of course. Instead, it applied to small No.1, No. 2 or No. 3 bore (6mm, 7 mm and 9 mm) shotguns firing small shot; or was sometimes applied to some small calibre saloon rifles when used out of doors, firing rimfire round BB (bullet breech) cap, powered only by the primer for Flobert rifles - or conical nose (CB cap) bullets for shooting galleries with just a pinch of powder. The 6 mm and 7 mm Nos. 1 and 2 faded out long ago, so the 9 mm Webley No. 3 Garden Gun was really the last of the Floberts. Cartridges are expensive to buy now. I think the last 50 I bought were £12, costing 25p a shot.

#### Size matters

These bore sizes shouldn't be confused with a) the massive calibre Nos. 2, 3 and 4 bore shotguns, or b) the old airgun Nos. 1, 2 and 3 bore sizes (.177", .22" and .25"). Gardens were generally larger than the small ones accompanying newer housing nowadays, but given the right size garden, necessary shotgun certificate and conditions, they can still prove useful for moving pests like rats, pigeon and rabbits at close range, and are obviously less noisy and destructive than the bigger and more powerful .410 shotguns - especially in confined spaces, such as in barns where minimum damage from a shotgun is

Figure 4: Official Webley drawings discovered in their archives show an early Mk1 air pistol c.1926; a presentation model pocket revolver with crocodileskin-covered case and standard pocket model also with 3-inch barrel and small grip

Figure 5: Webley's Mark IV .22 'Target' and .32 and .38 'Pocket' revolver models advertised by Thomas Bland & Sons (Bunmakers) Ltd. Although undated and unnumbered, this catalogue is believed to date from the early 1950s

Figure 6: Front: These sand colour and black, official Miniature Range snapshooting targets Nos. 37 and 38 we often used as revolver targets at 60-feet range

Figure 7: Westley Richards & Co. Ltd. 1907 Patent 'Highest Possible' serial number 770 (c.1912) in dustproof, close-fitted teak case lined with blue velvet - plus a rare box of 1000 Eley Scout waisted pellets the 'Scout' name registered 10.1.1910 necessary.

The future of individual gardens and activities therein is looking depressing. The population of the UK is growing by the hundreds of thousands per year, owing to an on-going, open-door immigration policy by past governments desperate to prop up a failing economic system. A UK home office study of the past concluded that migration was good for economic growth, leading to some politicians saying the more populated a country, the more economic growth there is. Maybe they overlooked the fact that the more crowded a small island becomes, the more motor vehicles, the more demand and costs for power and water, and the more strain on an infrastructure collapsing under its own weight. The countryside is forced to make way as urban areas expand and soon we won't know where Liverpool ends and Manchester starts, as the gap closes to 30 miles.

Before I depress you further, let's look back to happier days when responsible, well-off people thought nothing of having a spot of cartridge-pistol shooting in the garden. Marksmanship at three-day shooting parties held at grand country-house estates, pre-World War One and during the early inter-wars periods, was not always confined to the grouse moors. On the third, so-called 'idle' day after two days' hard shooting,



FIGURE 5

PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS

Webley Pistols and Recolvers

MARK IV. 23 TANGET

PRICE E14/6/8

Burds 87

Woght 2 lib.
Pet 2 in 4 day.
An accuract and well hidrand sevelect, noise advantage rewight.

Klim the best & the charaks.

MARK IV. FOCKET REVOLVER

Calline 32 is 38

FRICE E11/13/A
is the charaks.

Revel Y

Woght 30 iib 6 con.
31 Ilb. 7 on.
32 Ilb. 7 on.
33 Charaksed for 38 X & W. revolver

Calline 32 is 5 & W. revolver

MICharaksed for 38 X & W. revolver

THOMAS BLAND & NONE, 4.1 WILLIAM IV STREET, LONDON, W.C.Y.

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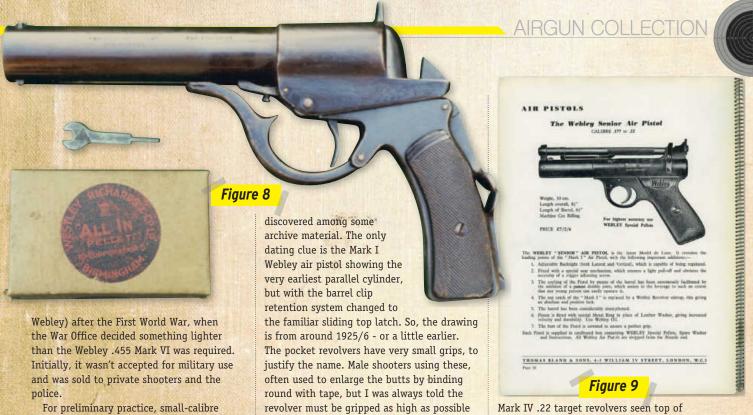
revolver-shooting target competitions might be staged on the garden range. Elsewhere, near the house, there would be tennis and other garden games, including croquet, which was very likely, the first game allowing equality of men and women. The guest list would often be restricted to relatives or intimate friends; the married women amusing themselves on shooting days with visiting, shopping, etc.

Younger, more intrepid ladies would be left to their own resources, and in the earlier days they would not be included in the shooting party, but some would join in any sociable pastimes, including pistol-shooting or archery events, when the young men would enjoy teaching the girls how to shoot but only up to the point when it was realised some were becoming better shots than they were! It's widely believed that women have steadier hands than men - so this might account for that. Often, it was a high-ranking military man who would organise these previously manly activities using his Webley Service revolver (Figure 3) or other pistols from his gunroom, and he may even have been the host and house owner.

A more suitable revolver for the use of a lady came about with the arrival of lighter weight models, with the smaller .38 calibre Mark IV Government Enfield (basically a

Figure 7





Crocodile shoes

utilised.

The presentation pocket model revolver appears to be in a crocodile-skin-covered case and, like the Standard pocket model, also with 3-inch barrel and small grip. Nowadays, such a case would cost a fortune even using farmed crocodile. Walk into John Lobb's shoe shop in London and you can buy a pair of croc-skin shoes for a mere £10,694 plus VAT at 20%. I'm sure some airgun collectors I know could well afford a pair, judging by the way they keep outbidding me at auctions.

on the stock, lining up with the guill and

almost to the barrel axis, so maybe Webley

thought any section of butt below the curled

little finger is wasted anyway - if this hold is

By the late 1950s, Thomas Bland's catalogue No. 59 still offered a Presentation Pocket Model Webley Revolver for £37.6.8 (£37.33). Richly

and goldplated with
mother-o'pearl stocks,
but the
handsome
case then
available was oak
with a baize lining.
While I've
never really
mastered the
art of pistol
shooting, or
personally owned

any Webley revolver, I knew a lot of people who did and I enjoyed firing the 'light barrel' .22 revolvers many years ago, in the days when I was allowed to do so legally - as well as the more conventional-looking Webley

Mark IV .22 target revolvers seen top of **Figure 5** when advertised by Thomas Bland & Sons (Gunmakers) of London in the very early 1950s.

Our revolver range was always 20 yards at a 2-inch bull. In the front of **Figure 6** are sand colour and black, official Miniature Range snapshooting targets Nos. 37 and 38 that we often used as revolver targets at 60-feet range. This was when we ran out of our much-patched Parker-Hale revolver targets. The No. 37 target actually represents 200 yards at 20 yards - snapshooting on the Miniature Rifle range and as only a fraction wider than two inches, they were handy for revolvers at 60 feet, whilst the larger, No. 38 represents 200 yards at 25 yards.

While I've always thought both air rifles and air pistols provided good training practice for shooting firearms of similar shape and heft, I've never really gone along with one aspect; the claim that the recoil of a Webley air pistol simulated that of a full-bore firearm, which at times seemed to suggest that someone well-practised with a Webley 'Senior', 'Mark I' or 'II', could then simply and seamlessly move on and immediately shoot a .455" revolver with the same accuracy without further instruction! I've fired Webley air pistols from an early age, but apart from knowing how to aim, pull the trigger, and the use of the 'bridle' catch (revolver stirrup) - the air pistols and larger-calibre Webley revolvers seemed miles apart!

In other words, I've always thought the oft-repeated claim that shooting a Webley air pistol was good practice because it simulated full-bore revolver shooting, might be a bit far-fetched. To be fair to Webley & Scott, I can't find any specific mention of the recoil characteristic being used in their advertising as a stated benefit to revolver practice, but everyone else seems to have said it - even

pistol model still illustrated by Thomas Bland & Sons (Gunmakers) Ltd., although this catalogue probably dates from the early 1950s

Webley & Scott versions, firing economical

better for private garden or indoor ranges.

.22 rimfire cartridges would have been even

The .22 Mk. VI 'Light barrel' of 1922 is easily

recognised by the circular barrel and stepped

cylinder. Although incredibly accurate, with

the laterally-adjustable, rear-sight blade let

into the top of the barrel latch - rather than

in front of it - and suitable for beginners, it

was accepted it was of little use as a trainer

because there was virtually no recoil to throw

the muzzle upwards, as when using full-bore

ammunition - the main problem for trainees

to have to overcome. I've fired one of these

Target revolver seen in Thomas Bland's 1950s

as trainers in respect of recoil at the time for

the full-bore Webley revolvers, then whatever

catalogues. If these were considered useless

and also the better-looking Mark IV .22"

use would an air pistol have been?

Figure 4 shows official Webley line

Figure 10: Immediate post-war Webley 'Senior', pre September 1949 with barrel knurling extending forward over the short link/cocking slider as the pistol advertised in Figure 9. Note the very 'curly' trigger, later trimmed back at the tip



AIRGUN COLLECTION

those who have never shot a revolver in their lives! Before you write in to disagree, please wait until after next month - because you may change your mind when I include expert comments from other shooters, and also reveal the thoughts of an important shooting man working within the heart of pre-war Webley - who appeared to agree with me.

Houses and grounds were often so much larger than today. My own mother, when young, once lived in a house so large that she and her two brothers used to cycle between rooms, rather than walk the corridors! A noisy, full-bore revolver might have been fun for informal target practice in the Brigadier's sunny walled garden situated miles from neighbours in days long past, but the old soldier's house nowadays, might no longer stand alone. Houses would have sprung up all around it - along with 'concerned' (i.e. nosey) neighbouring occupants and the Brigadier and his house-party guests would soon all be

arrested for possessing a prohibited handgun, so he'd have to be content with using his old Westley's 'Highest Possible' air pistol in house and garden.

Figure 7 shows a Westley Richards & Co. Ltd. 1907 Patent 'Highest Possible' serial number 770, military black finish in dustproof, close-fitted teak case lined with blue velvet, plus a rare box of 1000 Eley Scout waisted pellets - the 'Scout' name registered 10.1.1910. That same day, Eley also registered their 'Black Boy' pointed slugs for smoothbore airguns. In the inter-war years, the estate owner might have reached for his Westley Richards Patent 1921 axial barrel design re-issued 'Highest Possible' c.1926 and Westley's 'All-In' pellets in order to take a few pot-shots as he patrolled his sunny garden. The pellet carton label also seen in Figure 8 was probably designed in circular form to fit on round tins, but I've no confirmation of this.

Webley's immediate post-war 'Senior' air pistol model was illustrated using a slightly obsolete printing block in Thomas Bland & Sons (Gunmakers) Ltd. Catalogue (Figure 9) probably dating from the early 1950s. A Webley 'Senior', pre-September 1949, with barrel knurling extending forward over the short link/cocking slider (as the pistol advertised) appears in Figure 10. Note the very 'curly' trigger, later trimmed back at the tip.

Various old blank cartridges are shown in Figure 11, the S.&W. blanks fitting the .32 chambered Webley Pocket Revolver. All blanks should be treated with caution, and using blanks in a revolver during training had only limited use for, maybe, helping to cure flinching in anticipation of recoil, but the weight of a bulleted round will obviously produce different recoil.

The chromium-plated Webley Junior air pistol seen in **Figure 12** dates from the January 1946 to January 1951 period, and would have been ideal for the smaller postwar garden. Both pre- and post-war plated Webley Juniors are extremely rare, probably due to the plating costs

WEBLEY
SPICIAL PRILITY
WEBLEY
WEBLEY
AND UNITED STATES OF THE STATES OF

Figure 12

compared to the price of the pistol. Webley ceased plating in 1956.

Figure 13 shows my LP53, serial number 007748 fitted with Walther left-handed, stippled wood grips. The well-worn barrel finish shows much use since it was produced, probably in early 1966. There's no disputing the fact the Walther LP53 Target Air Pistol was a good trainer for the Walther Olympia .22 cartridge pistol, but from first-hand experience, its so-called 'recoil simulator' caused by its curious upwards angled 'jump' due to upward thrust of the piston in the grip (rather than to the rear - as with the Webley air pistol) didn't help with a revolver.

The late Derek Swaine was a county rifle shot and was also a great pistol shot - so I stood no chance in competition with him. Practice with Walther LP53s beforehand and then shooting his Harrington & Richardson revolver demonstrated there was no real recoil comparison between the two. Firing the air pistol beforehand seemed a handicap - rather than an aid - and as anyone who has ever fired a proper firearm would know, there was very little, if any, similarity in the firing actions or recoil between the two types of pistol.

SOURCES: Thomas Bland & Sons Ltd. 1950s

Catalogues and Webley Archives.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: My thanks to
Chester Purllant for use of his 'Concentric'
model 'Highest Possible' air pistol
photograph.

Figure 13

blanks fitting the .32 chambered Webley Pocket Revolver. Using blanks in a revolver during training had only limited practical use - unless you just enjoyed making a lot of noise

Figure 12: This chromium-plated Webley Junior

air pistol dates from th**&** January 1946 to January 1951 period

Figure 13: Designed on the lines of the Walther Olympic Pistol, of international fame, the author's LP53 Target Air Pistol is fitted with Walther left-handed stippled wood grips

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# PASS IT ON

## Jerry Moss shares his knowledge with some aspiring gamekeepers

alcolm Riding the Head of Gamekeeping, at the Northern School of Game and Wildlife, Newton Rigg, near Penrith, phoned me to ask if I could help him out with an event that was due to take place at the college in a few weeks' time. I have known Malcolm for 20-odd years since I was a student there, and we have stayed in touch because we try to help each other out with various things in the world of shooting and conservation. The 'Gamekeeping Experience Weekends' are run in conjunction with, and massively supported by, BASC (British Association for Shooting and Conservation), and there are 12 places to be won by budding 'gamekeepers' over each of the two weekends. To win a place, the applicants have to write 200 words on why they want to come along to the event.

#### Course

Over the weekend, they will get an insight into the game department at the college, as well as undertaking various activities such as; visiting a grouse moor, insight into deer stalking, game rearing, pheasant pen building and so on. Malcolm asked if I could maybe run an air-rifle range on the Friday evening, and explain the use of air rifles in pest control. This I agreed to do because I am always



"This went down a treat and all groups got some rabbits, resulting in a nice bag an hour or so later"



Above How about the chance to shoot a new

Background: The students were surprised to get out hunting

Left: I was able to coach them safely from the bench willing to pass on my knowledge to the up-and-coming youngsters to our sport. I arranged with Christian and Ando, two fellow squirrel rangers, to help me out because it's always good to have a few people on hand to talk to people, and for range safety.

The first of the two weekends arrived and we set up a range on the sports field. Targets were spinners and some Jack Pyke Spot-Shot and target stickers, and we had a range of Daystate Rifles for the youngsters to use, including the new Pulsar. The group made their way over to us, accompanied by Malcolm, and Duncan Thomas, BASC Regional Officer - North West, and after an introduction into our work and why we use air rifles, both sub-12 ft.lbs. and FAC-rifles, for controlling grey squirrels, the group were invited to have a go at shooting the targets. Most of the group had already shot air rifles, and some of the shooting was very impressive. We also talked about and tried shooting at different ranges.

#### **INFORMATION**



As always, we welcome your thoughts and ideas. Get in touch and tell us about the methods that work for you.



#### Let's ac

Then the surprise came for the group. They were asked to split themselves into four groups of three, and then told that we were then going to go off in separate directions and shoot some of the rabbits around the fields of the college campus. This went down a treat, and all groups got some rabbits, resulting in a nice bag an hour or so later. They were then shown how to gut and skin the rabbits ready for the barbecue the next day.

The second Friday evening was basically a repeat performance, and very much enjoyed by all. In an email the following week from Malcolm, to thank us for our help, it turned out that the air-rifle shooting was ranked as one of the top activities over the weekends. For more information on gamekeeping courses at Newton Rigg College, go to www.gamekeeping.org.

and for more on BASC, it's www.basc.org.uk ■



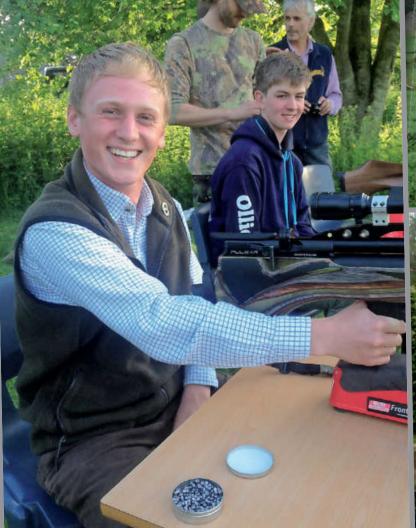
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might seem obvious that when we're hunting we need to be quiet, but some people just can't. I have a good friend who finds it nearly impossible to sit still and be silent, and when he walks he make one hell of a racket. Does he get close to the rabbits? Let's just say he shoots a .17HMR these days that can reach 125 yards. Enough said?

Moving silently through the countryside is a real skill that needs time and patience to learn. You can start by making sure nothing you carry

is different. Firstly, shorten your stride. When you take little steps you can place the front foot very carefully so that if you sense you're about to stand on a stick and snap it, you can take the weight off it. If you're bowling along using big strides, you're committed to planting that front foot, no matter what.

Next, practise placing the outside of your heel down carefully and then rolling the foot slowly flat. This gives time to feel what's beneath your boot. Allowing the sole just to slap down

"practise placing the outside of your heel down carefully and then rolling the foot slowly flat"

or wear rattles. Metallic sounds are very unnatural, and wildlife is sure to understand that there's something strange in the woods.

Then we need to think about the action of walking. Sounds daft I know, because you've been doing it since you were one year old, but walking quietly

hard is a complete no-no. It's also worth considering which footwear you'll be quietest in. I wear lightweight boots that offer grip and support, but are still supple and flexible. Huge, rigid mountaineering boots offer tremendous support and protection, but they're noisy and clumsy, so

Main: Any step you take could ruin a stalk so think before you move they're a poor choice.

One of our most famous airgun hunters, the late John Darling, swore by running shoes for their lightness, flexibility and grip, but they don't work for me. They offer little stability, few are waterproof, and they're generally some pretty bright colours.

Wellingtons make sense for the wet weather to keep you clean and dry, and I used them for years, but they can be noisy and generally lack support. Lace-up boots are my top choice, and I have a taller, insulated pair for the winter to complement the light summer ones.

The final piece of the jigsaw is to use your eyes. Look carefully where each foot will fall and decide, before you move, where the ground will allow silent movement. Just striding along won't do. Each step can make or break any stalk, so go slowly, shorten your stride, roll your feet. Your 'noise signature' will be greatly reduced and your hunting success will increase.



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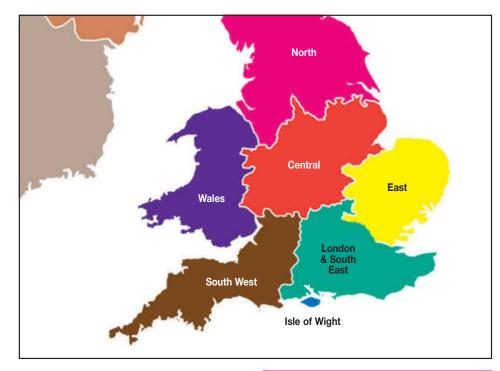
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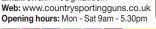
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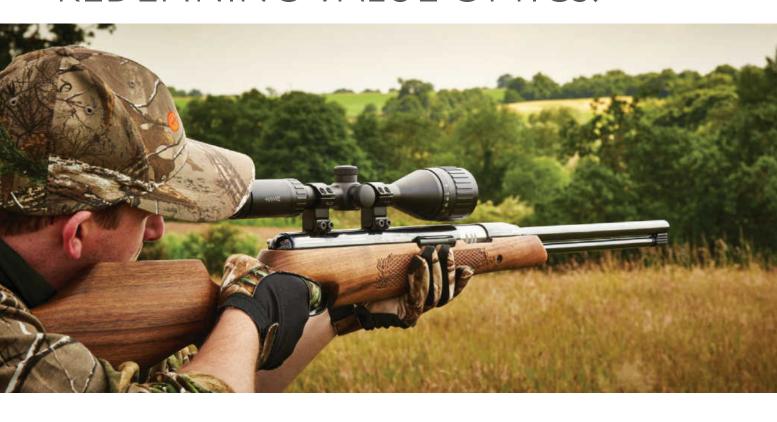
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